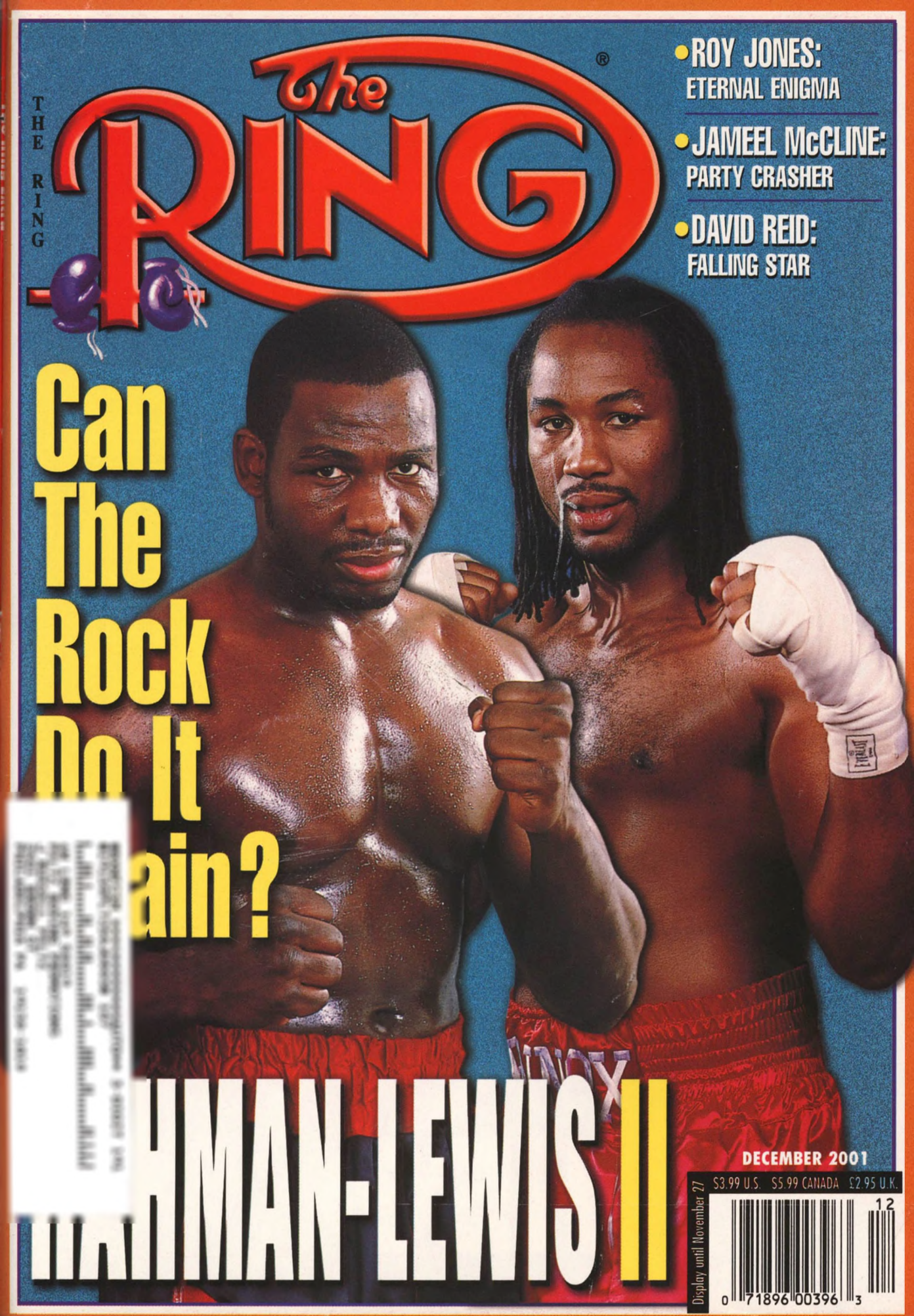
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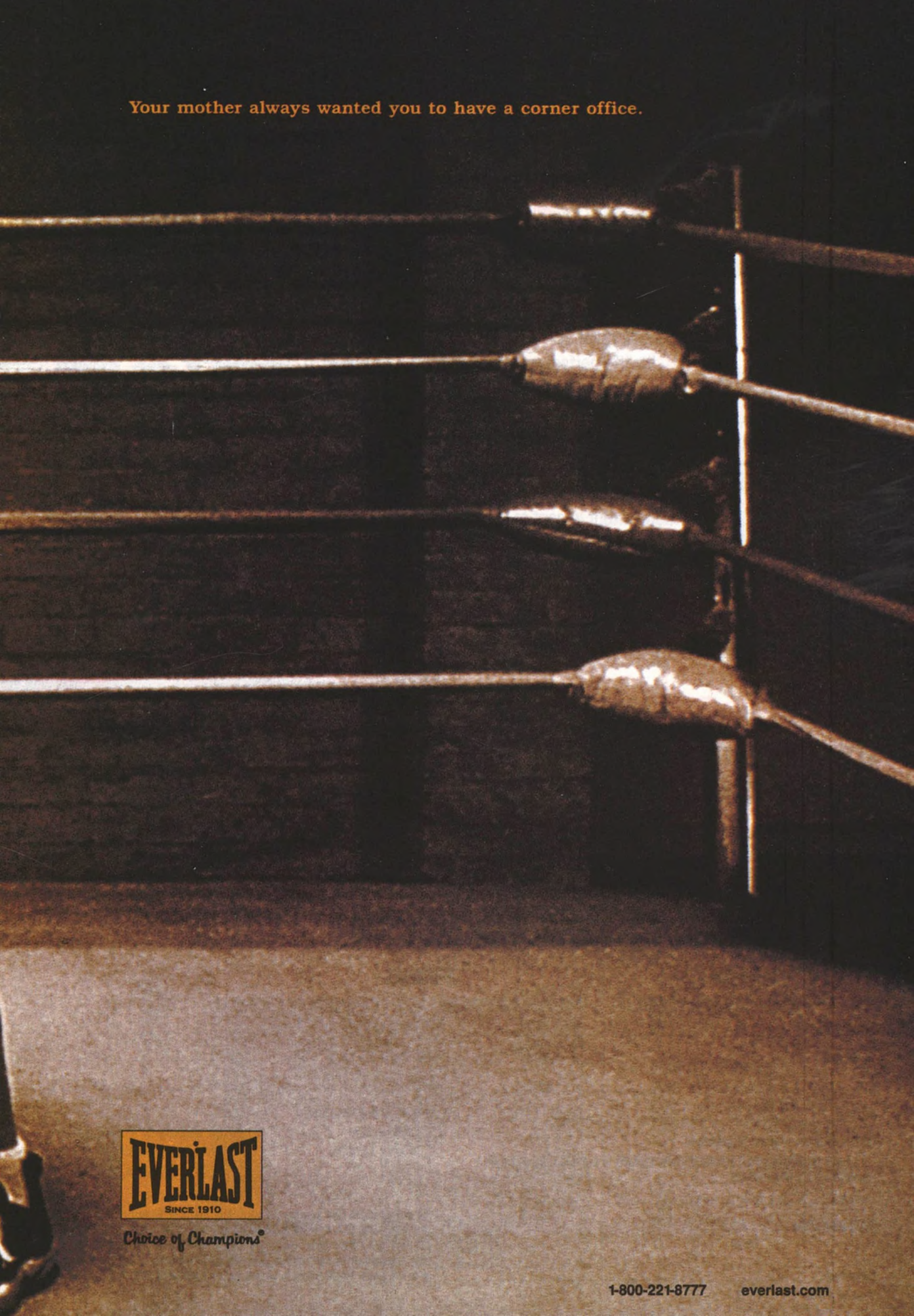
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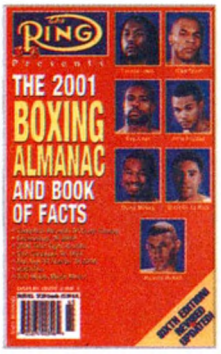

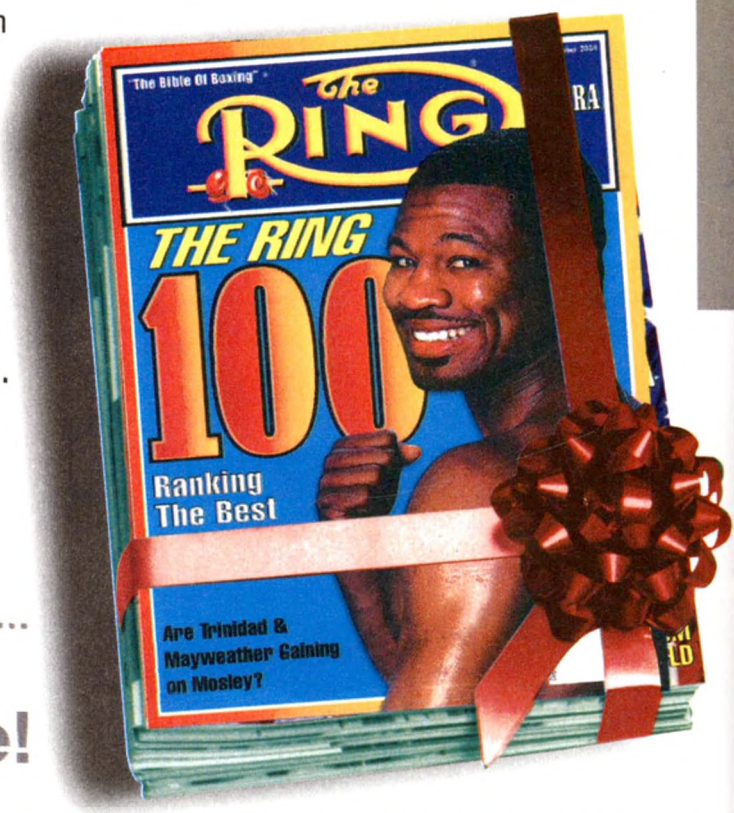

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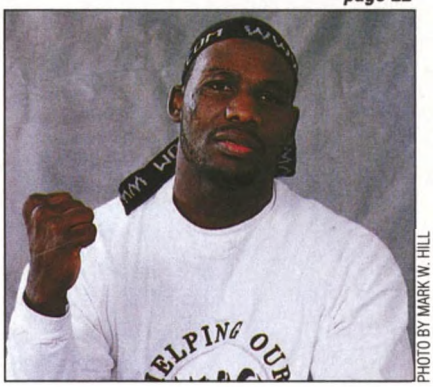

PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

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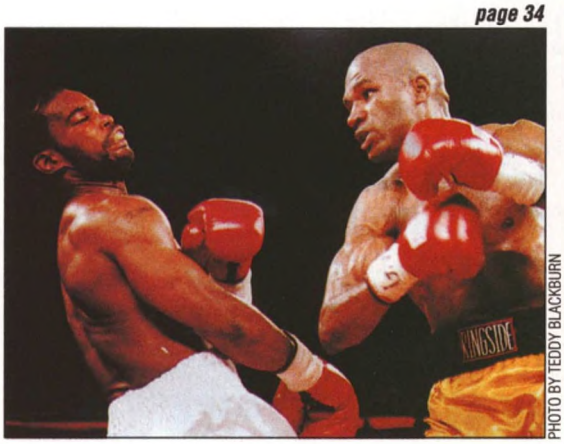

PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

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RINGSIDE

I've always had misgivings about the accidental foul rule, and my apprehension was reinforced by the recent Jesse James Leija-Hector Camacho Jr. farce. On the surface, the rule seems far more equitable than the way things were done in the old days, when regardless of how a fighter was injured, if he couldn't continue, he lost via TKO. But as Hector Jr. demonstrated, the current rule is ripe for abuse.

Going to the scorecards when the bout has passed the prescribed number of rounds only works if everybody behaves in an honorable fashion. But when a win-at-all-costs mentality takes over, the concept quickly falls apart. Camacho isn't the first fighter to try to steal a fight by taking unfair advantage of the rule. Remember the second Julio Cesar Chavez-Frankie Randall fight? That was another incident where one fighter clearly quit (in that case, Chavez), only to be bailed out by the accidental foul rule and go home a winner.

The fact that the New York State Athletic Commission changed the Leija-Camacho decision from a technical win for Camacho to a no-contest is besides the point. Had it not been such a high-profile fight and if there hadn't been such a public outcry, the original decision would have probably stuck. All the NYSAC did was save face and prevent Leija, who should have won via TKO, from getting a total screwing. Unfortunately, the problem is still out there waiting for the next so-called fighter and his unscrupulous corner to take advantage of this well-meaning but flawed policy.

There is no perfect solution, but perhaps the most acceptable compromise would be to make all fights that are terminated due to an accidental foul no-contests. Like I said, it's not perfect, but at least quitters would never be rewarded for punking out.

***

When fighters such as Ray Robinson, Muhammad Ali, and Oscar De La Hoya cut records, they were hoping to expand their field of endeavors, maybe line up a second career for when boxing was over. Roy Jones is different. His debut as a rap artist was obviously aimed at answering his critics. "Y'All Must've Forgot" is an angry denouncement of those who don't hold Roy in quite as high esteem as he holds himself. But a self-serving song isn't going to help him climb any higher in the pound-for-pound ratings. You have to do that in a boxing ring, not a recording studio.

***

It's never good news when a boxing program fails, but if there's a silver lining to the demise of HBO's *KO Nation*, it's that TV networks now know what doesn't work. The idea of luring a younger demographic to the sport by incorporating dancing girls, rap artists, and MTV-style ring announcers proved a flop. ESPN2 had the right idea about attracting younger viewers when it hired Max Kellerman. But what makes it work isn't just Max's age and the fact that he's comfortable with hip-hop culture. What makes Max a success with younger fans is that he's able to express his knowledge and passion in a manner that the much-sought-after 18- to 34-year-old crowd can identify with. Young people aren't stupid; they know the difference between substance and superficiality. And if you can't keep it real, they're not going to watch.

***

Due to an electronic error in sending text to our printer, the "A, B, C, And Deas Of Boxing" that appeared in the November 2001 edition of THE RING EXTRA will be rerun in the January 2002 issue.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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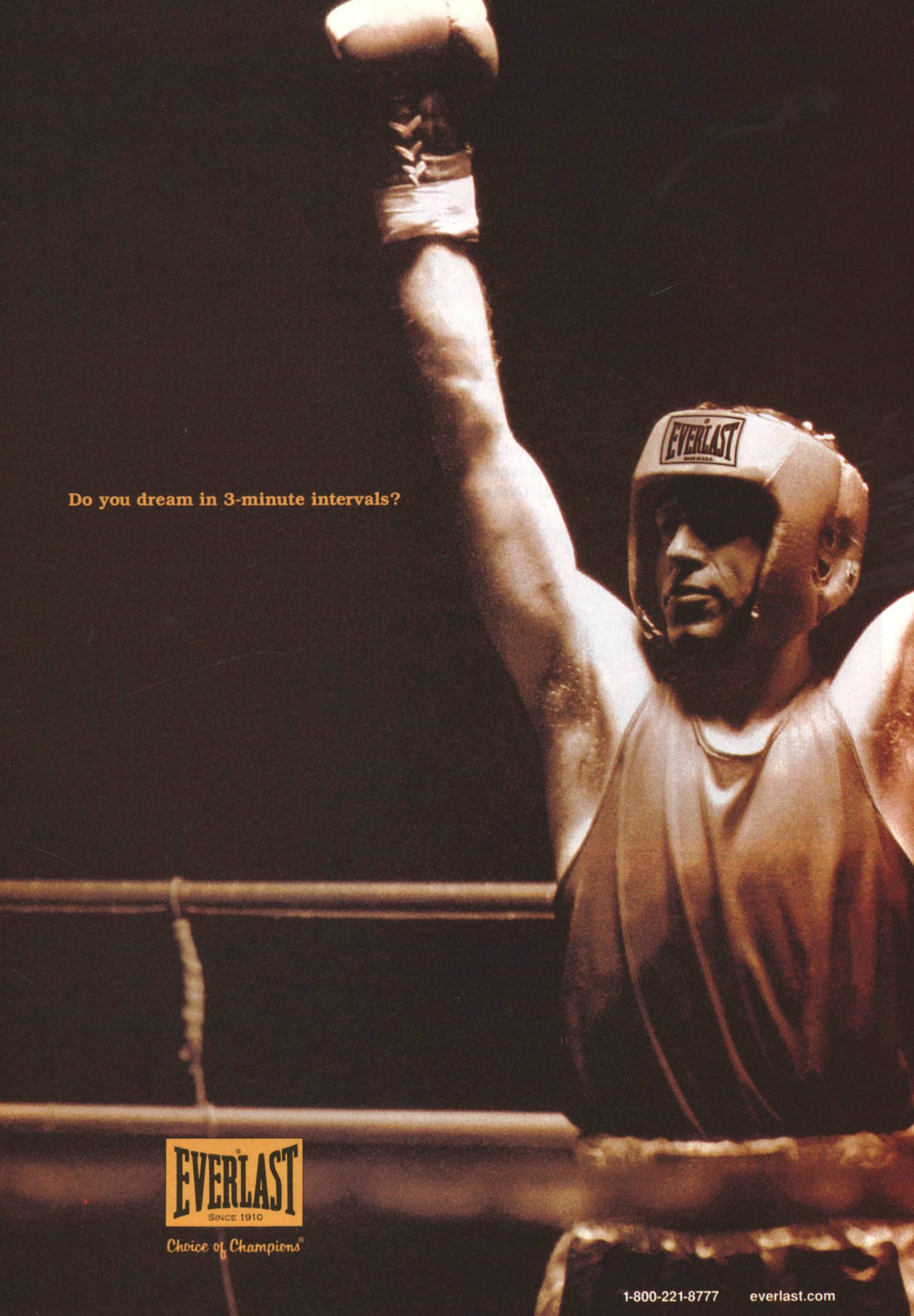
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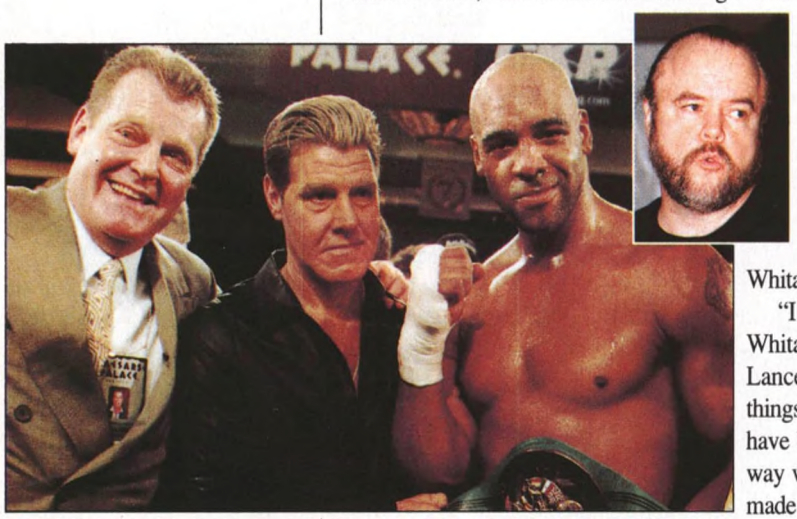
ROUND ONE

"GOOFI" SAYS GOODBYE GOOSSENS

When the news broke in July that Lance "Mount" Whitaker was bolting from America Presents, who had effectively promoted him to two HBO appearances and a top-10 heavyweight ranking, in favor of Rock Newman, who hadn't had any involvement in boxing since Riddick Bowe retired five years ago, it seemed quite odd. But nowhere near as odd as Whitaker's announcement on August 1 of boxing's most eyebrow-raising name change since Cassius Clay became Muhammad Ali: Whitaker, from now on, is to be known only as "Goofi."

"He changed his name because he wants a full and clean break from his time with America Presents," said Newman, "and because he's looking to cultivate a fan-friendly image. He's a lovable, playful, funny guy. When Goofi first proposed this to me, I was shocked, but I quickly came around. Could you imagine a fight announced as Iron Mike Tyson vs. Goofi!"



Newman (inset) pried Goofi from the brothers Goossen

Dan Goossen of America Presents doesn't find the situation amusing, and disputes Newman's claims that as of August 1, Whitaker had become a promotional free agent. In late-July, Goossen filed suit against Newman for tortuous interference, and against Whitaker for breach of contract.

"I blame the Rock Newmans of the world, not the Lance Whitakers," Goossen said. "We all have our strengths, and Lance's is to knock people out. Rock's is to do unethical things. All I can say is I feel sorry for Lance because he could have been a stand-up, moral person. Lance had come a long way with Joe [Goossen, Dan's brother] as his trainer. We've made a good team. But I understand the game of boxing."

Speculation was rampant as to why exactly Whitaker left America Presents. Newman and the fighter said the Goossens' brother-promoter-trainer relationship represented a conflict of interest. Goossen believed it was a simple case of the clever Newman telling Whitaker what to think. Another factor may be a bizarre accusation by America Presents employee Elan Haim of assault and attempted murder against Whitaker. Haim filed a civil suit charging that the heavyweight approached him in a Las Vegas gym, choked him, threw him on a treadmill, and battered him. (No criminal suit had been filed as of press time.) Whitaker denied the charges, and said he believes the Goossens had put Haim up to making the allegations.

The whole situation is, for lack of a better word, goofy. And that this upheaval came at a time when Whitaker's career was peaking after knockout wins over Oleg Maskaev and Robert Davis just makes it that much more unusual. Will he be able to recapture that momentum? Newman feels confident that Whitaker's progress hasn't been slowed. With Phil Borgia, best known for his work with Kevin Kelley, training Whitaker, Newman is angling for a title shot in the next 12-to-24 months.

"I met him, and over the course of three days, we developed a very quick, strong, and personal bond," said Newman of his new heavyweight. "He has the personality to become a superstar, and the size and raw talent to become heavyweight champion."

A heavyweight champion of the world named Goofi. It sounds a little farfetched for here on Earth. But it would be perfect for Pluto.

—Eric Raskin

RHINO ON THE LOOSE

Every time Clifford Etienne traveled out of his native Louisiana for a fight, or wanted to visit his parents outside of his parish, "The Black Rhino" had to make a call to his probation officer for permission. But on July 17, the heavyweight contender from Baton Rouge received a break from that minor hassle, as well as the chance to explore new avenues overseas, when a Louisiana Pardon Board relieved Etienne of his 10-year parole.

Etienne, 31, has posted a 20-1 (14) record since being released from prison in 1998, after being held for 10 years on an armed robbery conviction. The board issued a full pardon to Etienne, except for the right to carry a firearm.

"This restores all of my rights," said Etienne, whose only loss came by eighth-round knockout to Fres Oquendo on March 23. "I could travel when I was on probation, but I had to get a permit every time I left the state. I had to report to my parole officer once a month. There were a lot of little things I had to do. When I wanted to see my mother or father, I had to make a call to get permission to leave the county. This pardon means I'll be able to travel outside the country. I can fight in Timbuktu if I want."

His newfound freedom isn't the only major recent change that will affect Etienne's career. Since the Oquendo loss, The Black Rhino has hired a new trainer, switching from Don Turner to Jack Mosley, father of WBC welterweight champ Shane Mosley.

—Joe Santoliquito

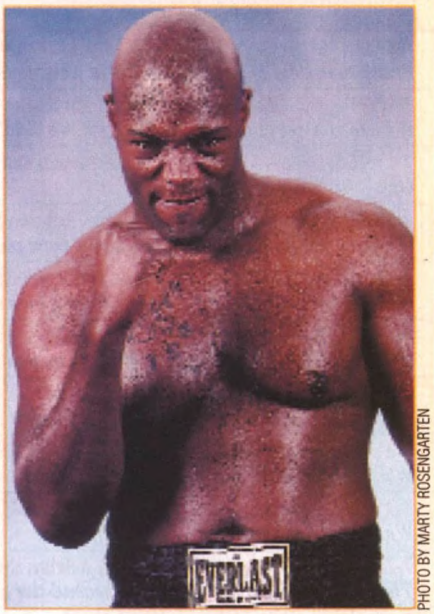


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Etienne is free to fight where he wants

STRONG BODY, WEAK MIND

PHOTO BY KOICHI YOSHIZAWA

Ventura: Bodyslams Minnesota Board of Boxing

After he got himself elected governor of Minnesota in 1998, former professional wrestler Jesse Ventura, whose ring nickname was "The Body," declared that henceforth he should be known as "The Mind." In light of some of the governor's public pronouncements, that would seem on a par with calling the bald-headed Ventura "Curly."

Take, for instance, his comments concerning the Minnesota Board of Boxing, which after 86 years of overseeing the sport in the state, was abolished as of July 1, because legislators felt its $65,000 annual outlay could better be spent elsewhere. The Mind was all for the elimination of the seven-man boxing commission because "if pro wrestling doesn't need supervision, boxing doesn't either."

In his locally published column called "Let's Talk Boxing," George D. Blair, Minnesota's foremost boxing historian, didn't mince words replying to that one: "Somebody should tell this dork that the big difference between wrestling and boxing is that boxing is not fake and wrestling is. There was a time when the state boxing commission also supervised pro wrestling, but it became so ridiculous that it was deemed to be entertainment, not a sport, and it was dropped from the commission's supervision. For the governor to compare boxing and wrestling, saying they're the same, was really dumb."

Minnesota bureaucrats say that officials from the Association of Boxing Commissions or from neighboring states should be used to supervise shows there. But, said Blair, who has been covering and writing about boxing for almost a half-century, "that isn't going to do the trick as far as I'm concerned. I saw some of the matches that both organizations have okayed, so if you go see this stuff in the future, expect to see some terrible mismatches."

—Pete Ehrmann

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
7-8-01	David Reid W 10 Maurice Brantley	FOXSN	sm	B-	C	C+
Pretty soon Reid is going to run out of weight classes to look shot in						
7-10-01	**Eric Lucas KO 7 Glenn Catley**	**ESPN2**	**WBC sm**	**A-**	**B+**	**B-**
If Lucas missed a right hand all night, we didn't see it						
7-13-01	Micky Ward W 10 Emanuel Burton	ESPN2	jw	B	A	A+
One word: Magnificent						
7-14-01	Hector Camacho W 12 Roberto Duran	PPV	sm	F	C	D+
We know you didn't watch it, but weren't you pulling for Duran just the same?						
7-17-01	Terronn Millett KO 5 Fray Sierra	ESPN2	jw	C+	C-	C
Give Millett credit for staying busy, even if he's not fighting top guys						
7-20-01	Vassiliy Jirov W 10 Adolpho Washington	ESPN2	h	B-	D+	C+
Jirov proves he's no heavyweight; but then, neither is Washington						
7-21-01	Johnny Molnar Tech. Win 8 Victor Rosado	Show	w	C	A-	C+
Molnar outhustles, outworks Rosado in ShoBox debut						
7-21-01	Leonard Dorin KO 9 Martin O'Malley	Show	l	C+	B+	C
What? An Irish guy stopped on cuts? No way!						
7-21-01	Jameel McCline KO 1 Michael Grant	HBO	h	B+	B	D+
When did Grant turn into Derrick Jefferson?						
7-21-01	**Shane Mosley KO 3 Adrian Stone**	**HBO**	**WBC w**	**A+**	**D+**	**B**
This is how a superstar deals with second-tier guys						
7-21-01	Harry Simon W 12 Hassine Cherifi	Show	m	B	C-	D+
Cherifi explodes the old myth about French prize fighters; they can go bald after all						
7-21-01	Daniel Santos No-Contest 1 Antonio Margarito	Show	w	B	A-	D
Hey, we didn't know one of the Backstreet Boys is a fighter						
7-24-01	Mark Johnson KO 6 Arturo Valenzuela	ESPN2	jf	B	D+	B-
Second fight back, Too Sharp looks, well, sharp						
7-27-01	Michael Moorer Tech. Draw 5 Dale Crowe	ESPN2	h	C+	B-	C+
Maybe Moorer is serious; when was the last time you saw him step in and throw hard shots like this?						
7-28-01	**Andrew Lewis No-Contest 2 Ricardo Mayorga**	**PPV**	**WBA w**	**A**	**B-**	**D**
If this had gone any longer, Six Heads would have been bleeding from every one of them						
7-28-01	Miguel Cotto KO 2 Arturo Rodriguez	PPV	l	C+	C	B-
Watch Cotto; he has the moves, the speed, and a hell of a hook						
7-28-01	**Erik Morales W 12 In Jin Chi**	**PPV**	**WBC f**	**A**	**C+**	**B+**
Apparently, Morales will never have an easy fight again						
7-28-01	**Roy Jones W 12 Julio Gonzalez**	**PPV**	**Unified lh**	**A+**	**D+**	**C**
Willie Pep couldn't knock out anyone and he's a legend; why do we demand it of Jones?						
7-31-01	Tony Ayala W 10 Santos Cardona	ESPN2	m	C+	B-	B
Think Cassandra Henderson was packing heat during her postfight interview with Ayala?						
8-3-01	Antonio Tarver KO 10 Chris Johnson	ESPN2	lh	B	B+	B
Every time Tarver says Roy Jones is ducking him, he should be reminded that Eric Harding kicked his ass						
8-3-01	Angel Manfredy W 10 Lamar Murphy	ESPN2	l	B+	B	B-
Manfredy may never be a world champ, but he's still one of the most solid fighters in the business						
8-4-01	Luis Collazo W 8 Luis Alberto Santiago	Show	jm	C-	B+	B
Collazo outworks stubborn Santiago and pulls out decision in solid prelim						
8-4-01	John Michael Johnson KO 3 Antonio Diaz	Show	f	C+	B	C-
Arthur Mercante Jr. has to be wondering if the old man had days like these						
8-4-01	Wladimir Klitschko KO 6 Charles Shufford	HBO	h	B	D	C-
Shufford portrayed George Foreman in the new movie about Muhammad Ali? Foreman should sue						
8-4-01	Paulie Ayala W 12 Bones Adams	HBO	jf	A	A+	A-
Wonderful matchup, wonderful fight, and the wrong guy got the decision ... again						
8-5-01	William Abelyan W 10 Guty Espadas	Uni	jl	B	D+	B-
Espadas floored twice, dominated by last-minute sub; what does this say about Erik Morales?						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Tel—Telemundo

"RIP"-PED OFF BY SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

Boxing doesn't have so many bona fide heroes that it can afford to let one fall through the cracks of history. The publication of a story in the July 23 issue of *Sports Illustrated* offers the opportunity to set the record straight regarding one of them.

The *SI* cover story by William Nack was about Bob Kalsu, who played a season with the Buffalo Bills before going to Vietnam in 1969 as a member of the U.S. Army. On July 21, 1970, Kalsu was killed at Firebase Ripcord. He was, as Nack's story states, a "true All-American." But the piece is incorrect in stating that Kalsu was the only U.S. pro athlete to be killed in the Vietnam War.

Where's the* Sports Illustrated *cover story on Randall?

In fact, he was the second. The first was welterweight contender Garland "Rip" Randall, from Tyler, Texas, who died of multiple shrapnel wounds on October 17, 1967, while serving with the Army's 26th Infantry.

Randall turned pro in 1957. He won the Texas state lightweight title in 1960, and by '64 was ranked third in the 147-pound division by THE RING. Among the top-notch fighters he defeated were Kenny Lane, former welterweight champion Virgil Akins, and Guy Sumlin. He lost decisions to welterweight champions Curtis Cokes and Luis Rodriguez and middleweight champion Nino Benvenuti.

"Rip was an excellent boxer, but he elected to fight as if every bout was a life or death struggle," wrote Harlan Haas in the January '68 issue of THE RING reporting Randall's death. "He never let up for a second. He was vicious and reckless. He swarmed to the attack, caring little for defense. He asked no quarter, gave none."

It was the same in the jungles of Vietnam, where Randall went in August '66, five months after knocking out Dean Whitlock in nine rounds in Houston to boost his record to 34-12-4 (14).

"The 271st Cong regiment made a charge on our base camp, and, man, was it rough," Randall recalled about one of his war experiences. "I carry the M-60 machine gun. There were four machine guns in our perimeter. Charley [the Vietcong] was tossing everything at us as they charged. All hell was breaking loose. It was kill or be killed, and I fired until Charley no longer made his screaming charge. This all happened at dawn, and when it became light, they counted 65 bodies on my side of the perimeter."

Randall got the Silver Star for that campaign, and later added a Bronze Star for wiping out a Vietcong bunker.

Only 26 when he died, with a wife and five youngsters back home, Randall had been looking forward to resuming his boxing career. According to Haas' article, the last letter he wrote from Vietnam to his manager, Houston builder Don Milheim, said: "Every time a bomb goes off it seems like my name is on it, but always someone else gets it. I saw a buddy get it. I miss the ring."

But he also believed in what he was doing. "I wish the war was over, but I don't mind too much about going back," Randall told writer John Hollis while home on emergency leave in 1967 when his son, Garland Jr., had open-heart surgery. "It's a job that has to be done. I'd rather stop what's happening there than have to stop it here."

—Pete Ehrmann

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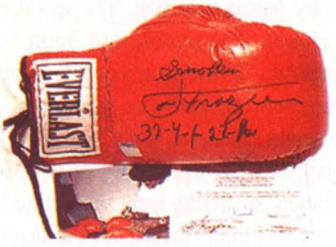

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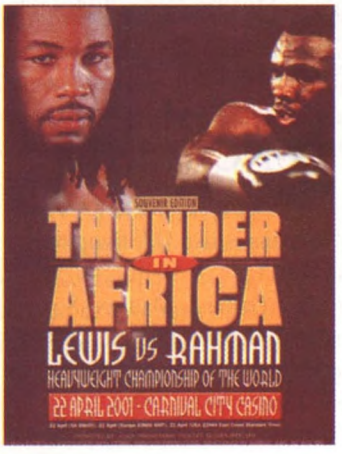

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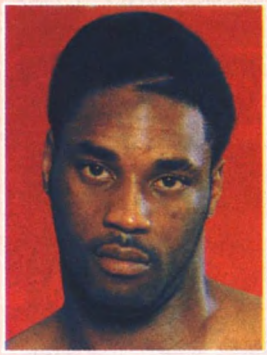
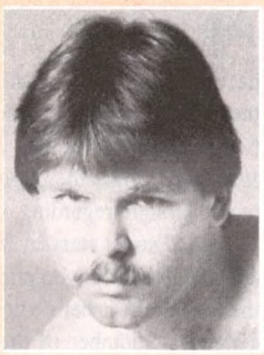


Scott: Jo-El goes back to Ja-Il

Early-July brought some very good news from Louisville, Kentucky, where former WBA heavyweight titlist **Greg Page** was released from Frazier Rehab Institute nearly four months after suffering a brain injury in a fight with **Dale Crowe**. Remarkably, Page, who needed surgery to remove a blood clot from his brain, is regaining his speech, and will continue to receive therapy five days a week ... Early-July also brought some bad news—at least for fans of HBO's *KO Nation*. The show, which debuted on May 6, 2000, was canceled due to low ratings (not to mention generally unfavorable critical response). After seven episodes as an afternoon experiment to lure younger viewers, *KO Nation* survived only three more episodes in a late-night time slot before being shelved ... Once-promising heavyweight **Jo-El Scott**, who was released from prison in '99 after serving three years on rape charges, is back in jail for parole violation. The specifics of the violation were not disclosed. The undefeated Scott had returned to the ring in December '00 and won a couple of bouts over journeymen before being sent back to the slammer ... Former IBF super middleweight champion **Graciano Rocchigiani** is also headed back to jail. The German fighter got a one-year sentence for probation violation, stemming from accusations that he punched a nightclub owner and then crashed his car driving drunk in August '00 ... While the 2000 Olympians are getting their pro careers swinging, one forgotten member of the class of '96 is hoping a new promoter can get his career going before it's too late. Undefeated but untested featherweight **Zahir Raheem**, who turned pro under the Top Rank banner, signed a deal in late-July with Let's Get It On Promotions, the company headed by **Mills Lane** and **Tony Holden** ... 1980s super middleweight contender **Chris Reid** died in early-July at the age of 38 after a long battle with cancer. Reid, a Brooklyn fighter known as "The Shamrock Express," challenged unsuccessfully for the IBF 168-pound title in October '88, losing by 11th-round stoppage to Rocchigiani. He promptly retired at the age of 25. Reid's former trainer, **Teddy Atlas**, delivered a touching tribute to the fighter on the July 13 edition of *Friday Night Fights* ... Former British Commonwealth and African light heavyweight champion **Lotte Mwale** of Zambia died of an unspecified illness in late-July at the age of 48. Mwale was kayoed in four rounds by **Matthew Saad Muhammad** in November '80 in a bid for the WBC 175-pound belt, and also fought the likes of **Marvin Johnson**, **Eddie Mustafa Muhammad**, and **Virgil Hill** ... There were two tragedies in the officiating world this month: New York-based former referee **Johnny LoBianco** died of a heart attack at age 86 in mid-July. LoBianco had been retired for 15 years, his last fight being a young **Mike Tyson's** first-round knockout of **Reggie Gross** at Madison Square Garden. Also passing away was Louisiana referee **Johnny Femia**, who drowned following a boating accident in his native New Orleans in late-June. Femia, 45, had refereed three world title fights (and judged three others), the last one being the **Roy Jones-Eric Harding** bout last September.



Reid: Dies of cancer at 38

THE PUNCHLINES

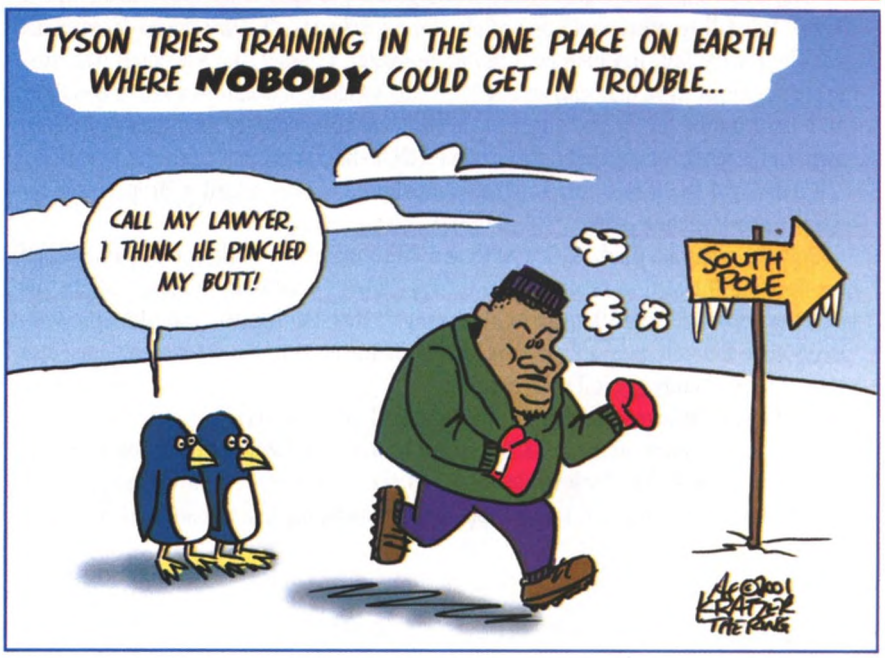
"Hopkins is like O.J. Simpson on this island."

—Eric Gelfand, Madison Square Garden publicist, on the public response to Bernard Hopkins in Puerto Rico

"Right now this looks like Marco Antonio Chi fighting Erik Morales."

—HBO analyst Larry Merchant, on the aggressive effort of In Jin Chi in his challenge for Morales' WBC featherweight title

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

(For period ended August 5, 2001)

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Welterweight
2. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Middleweight
3. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Junior Lightweight
4. **ROY JONES**
   Light Heavyweight
5. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Featherweight
6. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Junior Middleweight
7. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Middleweight
8. **NASEEM HAMED**
   Featherweight
9. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Junior Flyweight
10. **ERIK MORALES**
    Featherweight

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Wladimir Klitschko (fourth last issue) trades places with Mike Tyson (formerly third) due to greater activity.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Virgil Hill (second last issue) hasn't fought since he won the WBA belt in December 2000, and therefore drops to third, while busier Vassiliy Jirov (third last issue) advances to second. Marcelo Dominguez falls from fifth to eighth after losing to fourth-ranked Johnny Nelson. Dominguez' demotion pushes Carl Thompson (sixth last issue), Arthur Williams (seventh last issue), and James Toney (eighth last issue) all up one rung each.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Antonio Tarver (ninth last issue) jumps to sixth on the strength of his knockout of Chris Johnson (sixth last issue), while Johnson slumps to 10th. Lou Del Valle returns at number nine due to his draw with Bruno Girard, who stays at number eight. Greg Wright (10th last issue) departs to make room for Del Valle.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Eric Lucas debuts at the fifth position thanks to his knockout of Glenn Catley (ninth last issue) to win the vacant WBC crown. Catley exits. Lucas' big win shoves Charles Brewer (fifth last issue), Thomas Tate (sixth last issue), Dingaan Thobela (seventh last issue), and James Butler (eighth last issue) all down one spot each.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Harry Simon successfully moves up from the 154-pound class with a decision over Hassine Cherifi (sixth last issue) and is installed at number five. Cherifi slips to eighth. Erland Betare (10th last issue) departs to make room for Simon.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: With Simon (fourth last issue) now fighting at 160, everybody formerly ranked below him advances one spot, while Roman Karmazin is aboard at number 10.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Guty Espadas (fourth last issue) plunges to ninth after being upset by previously unranked William Abelyan, who debuts at eighth. Fred Norwood (formerly ninth) is dropped for inactivity, while Johnny Tapia (fifth last issue), Derrick Gainer (sixth last issue), Frankie Toledo (seventh last issue), and Mbulelo Botile (eighth last issue) all climb one position each.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Even though Bones Adams lost a close 12-rounder to Paulie Ayala, it was a bad decision, and Adams retains the number-one ranking. Ayala, who was stripped of the WBA bantamweight title for taking the Adams fight, will now campaign as a 122-pounder, and has been installed at number two. Ayala's arrival pushes everybody else down a notch, with Israel Vazquez (10th last issue) exiting.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Now that Ayala (second last issue) has moved up to junior feather, everybody below ascends one spot each, and Jorge Eliecer Julio comes back aboard at number 10.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

FLYWEIGHTS: Dormant IBF titlist Irene Pacheco (second last issue) switches with Pongsaklek Singwangcha (third last issue). Note: WBC champ Singwangcha was formerly known as Pongsaklek Wonjongkam.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

POUND-FOR-POUND: No changes. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended August 5, 2001

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Pongsaklek Singwangcha climbs to number two at flyweight with a successful defense of the WBC title

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

In each division, fighters are ranked according to their abilities and accomplishments.

Being champion does not necessarily mean a fighter will be rated at the top of his weight class.

These ratings reflect how the best fighters in the world rate against one another.

Ratings By The Editors

Records By Fight Fax Inc.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

1. **HASIM RAHMAN** Baltimore, MD *35-2 (WBC/IBF Champ)*
2. **LENNOX LEWIS** England *38-2-1*
3. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** Ukraine *37-1*
4. **MIKE TYSON** Catskill, NY *48-3*
5. **JOHN RUIZ** Chelsea, MA *37-4 (WBA Champ)*
6. **KIRK JOHNSON** Canada *32-0-1*
7. **DAVID TUA** New Zealand *38-2*
8. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** Fairburn, GA *37-5-1*
9. **LANCE WHITAKER** Mission Hills, CA *23-1*
10. **CHRIS BYRD** Flint, MI *33-2*

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Whittier, CA *34-2 (WBC Champ)*
2. **FERNANDO VARGAS** Oxnard, CA *21-1*
3. **WINKY WRIGHT** St. Petersburg, FL *41-3*
4. **FRANCISCO CASTILLEJO** Spain *51-5*
5. **BRONCO McKART** Monroe, MI *44-3*
6. **YORY BOY CAMPAS** Mexico *78-4*
7. **ALEX BUNEMA** Dallas, TX *19-2-1*
8. **J.C. CANDELO** Denver, CO *23-3-3*
9. **SHIBATA FLORES** Mexico *42-8*
10. **ROMAN KARMAZIN** Russia *28-0-1*

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

1. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA** Mexico *53-3*
2. **NASEEM HAMED** England *35-1*
3. **ERIK MORALES** Mexico *41-0 (WBC Champ)*
4. **JOHNNY TAPIA** Albuquerque, NM *50-2-2*
5. **DERRICK GAINER** Pensacola, FL *38-5 (WBA Champ)*
6. **FRANKIE TOLEDO** Paterson, NJ *40-5-1 (IBF Champ)*
7. **MBULELO BOTILE** South Africa *27-2*
8. **WILLIAM ABELYAN** Las Vegas, NV *17-4-1*
9. **GUTY ESPADAS** Mexico *34-4*
10. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Mexico *35-2*

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

1. **BONES ADAMS** Henderson, KY *41-4-3*
2. **PAULIE AYALA** Ft. Worth, TX *33-1*
3. **MANNY PACQUAIO** Philippines *33-2 (IBF Champ)*
4. **WILLIE JORRIN** Sacramento, CA *28-0 (WBC Champ)*
5. **LEHLO LEDWABA** South Africa *33-2-1*
6. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ** Mexico *28-1-2*
7. **OSCAR LARIOS** Mexico *40-3-1*
8. **MICHAEL BRODIE** England *30-1*
9. **JOSE LUIS VALBUENA** Venezuela *19-2-1*
10. **DANNY ROMERO** Albuquerque, NM *41-3-1*

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

1. **TIM AUSTIN** Cincinnati, OH *23-0-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM** Thailand *31-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **ADAN VARGAS*** Mexico *36-2-1*
4. **MARK JOHNSON** Washington, D.C. *40-1*
5. **JOHNNY BREDAHL** Denmark *50-2*
6. **JORGE LACIERVA** Mexico *19-3-3*
7. **MAURICIO MARTINEZ** Panama *19-3-1*
8. **GENARO GARCIA** Mexico *24-3*
9. **HUGO DIANZO** Mexico *26-6-1*
10. **JORGE ELIECER JULIO** Colombia *42-3*

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

1. **JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ**
   Germany 33-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **VASSILIY JIROV**
   Kazakhstan 28-0 (IBF Champ)
3. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND 47-3 (WBA Champ)
4. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 40-12-1
5. **CARL THOMPSON**
   England 28-5
6. **ARTHUR WILLIAMS**
   Pensacola, FL 34-5-1
7. **JAMES TONEY**
   Las Vegas, NV 61-4-2
8. **MARCEŁO DOMINGUEZ**
   Argentina 32-4-1
9. **FABRICE TIOZZO**
   France 42-2
10. **LOUIS AZILLE**
    Jersey City, NJ 16-0-2

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight limit: 175 pounds

1. **ROY JONES**
   Pensacola, FL 45-1 (WBC/WBA/IBF Champ)
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 44-0
3. **ERIC HARDING**
   Philadephia, PA 20-1-1
4. **REGGIE JOHNSON**
   Houston, TX 42-6-1
5. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
   Chicago, IL 41-3
6. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL 18-1
7. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
   Huntington Beach, CA 27-1
8. **BRUNO GIRARD**
   France 39-2-2
9. **LOU DEL VALLE**
   Bronx, NY 31-2-1
10. **CHRIS JOHNSON**
    Canada 26-3-1

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

1. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 31-0
2. **SVEN OTTKE**
   Germany 23-0 (IBF Champ)
3. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL 23-1-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 25-4-1
5. **ERIC LUCAS**
   Canada 33-4-3 (WBC Champ)
6. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA 36-8
7. **THOMAS TATE**
   Houston, TX 40-6
8. **DINGAAN THOBELA**
   South Africa 40-8-2
9. **JAMES BUTLER**
   Bronx, NY 18-1
10. **MADS LARSEN**
    Denmark 37-1

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Philadelphia, PA 39-2-1 (IBF/WBC Champ)
2. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Puerto Rico 40-0 (WBA Champ)
3. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. 32-2-1
4. **ARMAND KRAJNC**
   Sweden 25-0
5. **HARRY SIMON**
   Namibia 22-0
6. **KEITH HOLMES**
   Washington, D.C. 35-3
7. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
   England 32-0
8. **HASSINE CHERIFI**
   France 32-5-1
9. **CARL DANIELS**
   St. Louis, MO 47-3-1
10. **ANTONIO PERUGINO**
    Italy 17-0

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

1. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA 38-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **ANDREW LEWIS**
   Guyana 21-0-1 (WBA Champ)
3. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA 32-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark 25-0
5. **DANIEL SANTOS**
   Puerto Rico 24-2-1
6. **JAMES PAGE**
   Pittsburg, CA 25-4
7. **RAFAEL PINEDA**
   Colombia 34-3
8. **SHANNAN TAYLOR**
   Australia 29-1-1
9. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
   Mexico 25-3
10. **MANUEL GOMEZ**
    Mexico 21-10

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

1. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Australia 27-1-1 (WBA/WBC Champ)
2. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 27-0 (IBF Champ)
3. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 47-3
4. **ANTONIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA 35-3
5. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
   Washington, D.C. 26-1-1
6. **ENER JULIO**
   Colombia 21-3
7. **RANDALL BAILEY**
   Miami, FL 24-1
8. **MICKY WARD**
   Lowell, MA 37-10
9. **TERRONN MILLETT**
   St. Louis, MO 25-2-1
10. **OKTAY URKAL**
    Germany 28-1

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

1. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
   Mexico 43-4-1 (WBC Champ)
2. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 32-2-1
3. **PAUL SPADAFORA**
   Pittsburgh, PA 33-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **JULIEN LORCY**
   France 49-2-2 (WBA Champ)
5. **ANGEL MANFREDY**
   Gary, IN 38-5-1
6. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
   Uzbekistan 33-0
7. **COLIN DUNNE**
   England 33-1
8. **JESSE JAMES LEIJA**
   San Antonio, TX 42-5-2
9. **TAKANORI HATAKEYAMA**
   Japan 24-2-3
10. **JUAN LAZCANO**
    El Paso, TX 27-2-1

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI 26-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Miami, FL 25-0 (WBA Champ)
3. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 29-0
4. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 35-1
5. **STEVE FORBES**
   Las Vegas, NV 19-1 (IBF Champ)
6. **JONGKWON BAEK**
   South Korea 22-1-1
7. **LAKVA SIM**
   Mongolia 13-2-1
8. **JOHN BROWN**
   Atlantic City, NJ 23-8
9. **ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ**
   Mexico 46-4-1
10. **TONTCHO TONTCHEV**
    Bulgaria 24-0

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
   North Korea 24-2-1 (WBC Champ)
2. **CELES KOBAYASHI**
   Japan 23-4-3 (WBA Champ)
3. **FELIX MACHADO**
   Venezuela 21-3-1 (IBF Champ)
4. **GERRY PENALOSA**
   Philippines 43-3-2
5. **SAMSON TOYOTA-THAILAND**
   Thailand 40-0
6. **JESUS ROJAS**
   Venezuela 34-8-3
7. **PEDRO ALCAZAR**
   Panama 21-1-1
8. **IN JOO CHO**
   South Korea 18-2
9. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia 26-3
10. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
    Mexico 20-0

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

1. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 30-0 (WBA Champ)
2. **PONGSAKLEK SINGWANGCHA**
   Thailand 40-2 (WBC Champ)
3. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 25-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **HAWK MAKEPULA**
   South Africa 18-1
5. **MEDGOEN TOYOTA-THAILAND**
   Thailand 24-1
6. **SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT**
   Thailand 39-1
7. **ALEJANDRO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 46-3
8. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 22-0-1
9. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines 11-1-2
10. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
    Venezuela 16-0

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

1. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Mexico 49-0-1 (IBF Champ)
2. **YOSAM CHOI**
   South Korea 23-1 (WBC Champ)
3. **PICHIT C. SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 23-1
4. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
   Nicaragua 29-2-1 (WBA Champ)
5. **BEBIS MENDOZA**
   Colombia 26-1
6. **ZOLANI PETELO**
   South Africa 17-2-2
7. **WILL GRIGSBY**
   St. Paul, MN 15-2-1
8. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 26-3-1
9. **HIDENOBU HONDA**
   Japan 23-1
10. **NELSON DIEPPA**
    Puerto Rico 20-2-1

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

1. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 44-1-2 (WBA Champ)
2. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 25-1-1 (WBC Champ)
3. **ROBERTO LEYVA**
   Mexico 18-0 (IBF Champ)
4. **KEITARO HOSHINO**
   Japan 21-7
5. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines 30-6-1
6. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 13-2-1
7. **WANDEE SINGWANGCHA**
   Thailand 28-4
8. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Colombia 33-2
9. **DANIEL REYES**
   Colombia 24-1
10. **YUTAKA NIIDA**
    Japan 13-0-3

CAMERA CLICKS

PHOTO BY BRIAN CANNON/DKP

"I'd rather have a half-million bucks in a duffel bag, but this belt ain't bad." Hasim Rahman thanks Ring *Editor-in-Chief Nigel Collins for giving him the hardware recognizing "The Rock" as the linear heavyweight champion of the world during an early-July press conference in New York.*

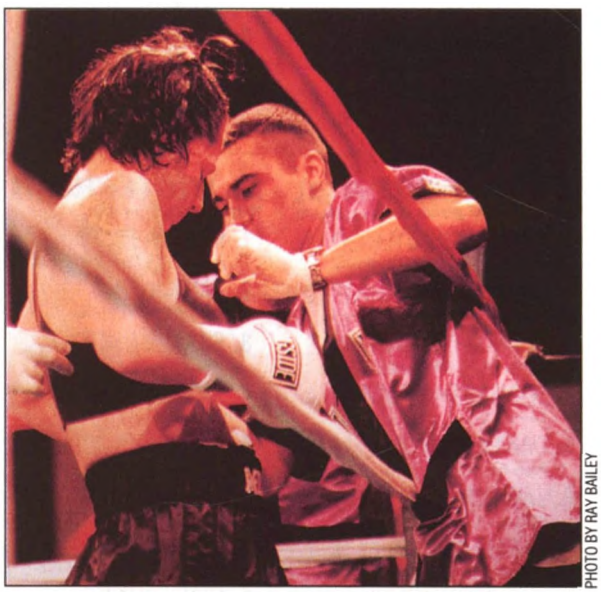


PHOTO BY RAY BAILEY

Junior lightweight contender Jesus Chavez recently found himself in a touchy situation when working the corner of female welterweight Snodene Blakeney. It's not quite clear what the problem was—a sports bra adjustment is our best guess—but it is clear that Chavez took a handle-with-care approach.

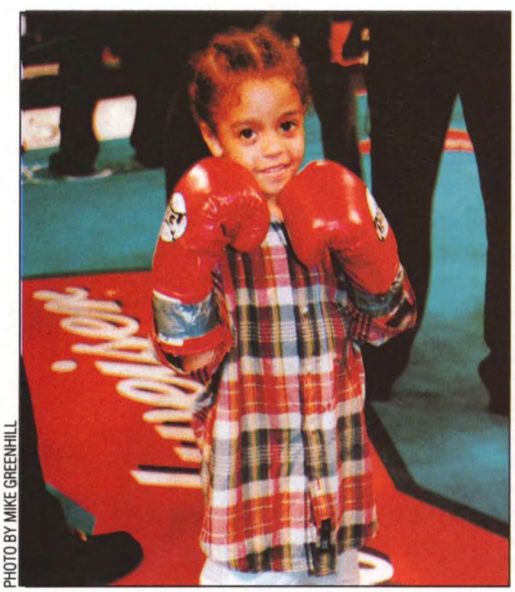


PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

No, this isn't a picture of Rudy Huxtable wearing boxing gloves. That's junior welterweight titlist Zab Judah's son, Narcisse, presumably auditioning for a slot on ShoBox.

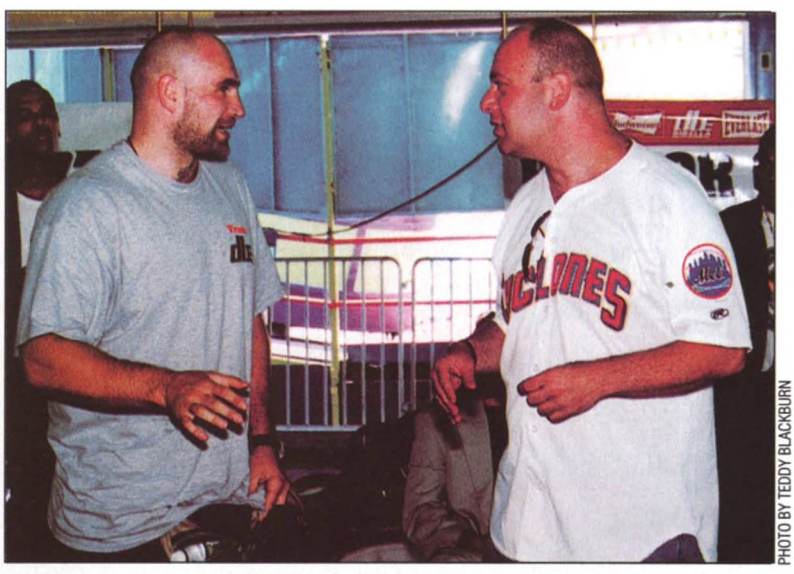


PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

"I could've sworn I just shaved." Lou DiBella is momentarily disoriented as his Italian heavyweight prospect, Paolo Vidoz, steps directly in front of him, giving DiBella the impression that he is looking into a mirror. If it weren't for Vidoz' beard, these two would be harder to tell apart than the Olsen twins.

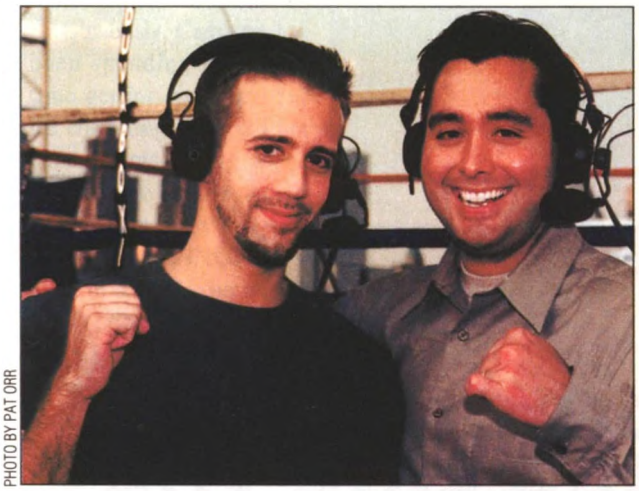


PHOTO BY PAT ORR

Take a close look at the mouths of ESPN2 **Tuesday Night Fights** *commentators Max Kellerman and Mario Diaz. Kellerman has his mouth shut, and Diaz is smiling but not saying anything. That's right, Kellerman and Diaz are pictured together here, and neither one is talking. This rare photo could be worth millions.*

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Former pro wrestling valet Tammy Lynn Sytch (a.k.a. "Sunny") has apparently decided to give real sports a try, and she served as a round card girl at the June 26 fight card aboard the U.S.S. Intrepid. Sunny, we salute your decision wholeheartedly.

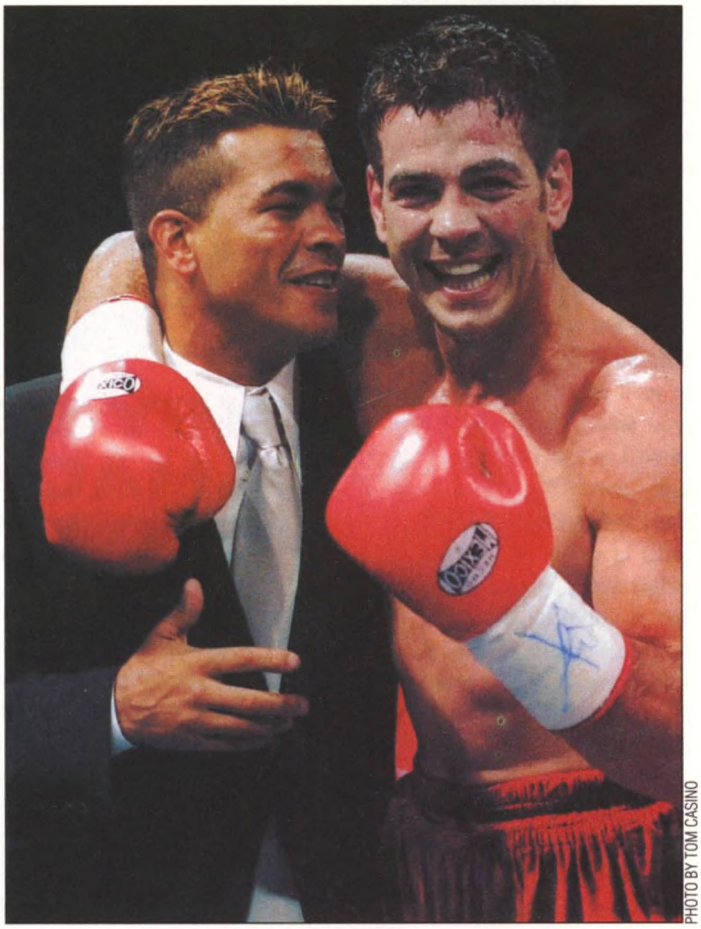


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

Two Gattis and not a single drop of blood! The only sight rarer is seeing two Mayweathers together without a single argument starting. Arturo was on hand after big brother Joe scored a fifth-round knockout of Alex Hilton, a fight in which he showed that, yes, it is possible for a Gatti to use defense.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

The forecast calls for a Hurricane: Astrologist Nicoletta Tedeschi gives 1960s middleweight contender Joey Archer a glimpse into his future in this publicity shot hyping his fight with Rubin "Hurricane" Carter at Madison Square Garden. Archer went on to decision Carter in the 10-round bout.

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

THEY DON'T MAKE CAMACHOS LIKE THEY USED TO

While the setting might have been most appropriate for his father, a guy whose career was once so much of a sideshow that he should have traveled with a band of carnies instead of an entourage, Coney Island was nonetheless a fitting setting for the coming-out party of Hector Camacho Jr. What better setting for such a hot dog than a place where weenies are so celebrated, Nathan's holds a contest every Independence Day to determine which slob with an iron gut can inhale the greatest number of them in record time?

What better setting than a place that—like the Camacho family name—is far more celebrated for its past than its present, yet is trying to rebuild itself to appeal to a new generation? What better place than the long-time home of one of the world's greatest freak shows? Coney Island offers us the bearded lady, the guy swallowing swords, and the dog with two heads. And so, there was the untested Camacho Jr. trying to prove that he had a good beard, wouldn't be affected by a lump in *his* throat, and would one day be ready for the likes of "Six Heads" Lewis.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

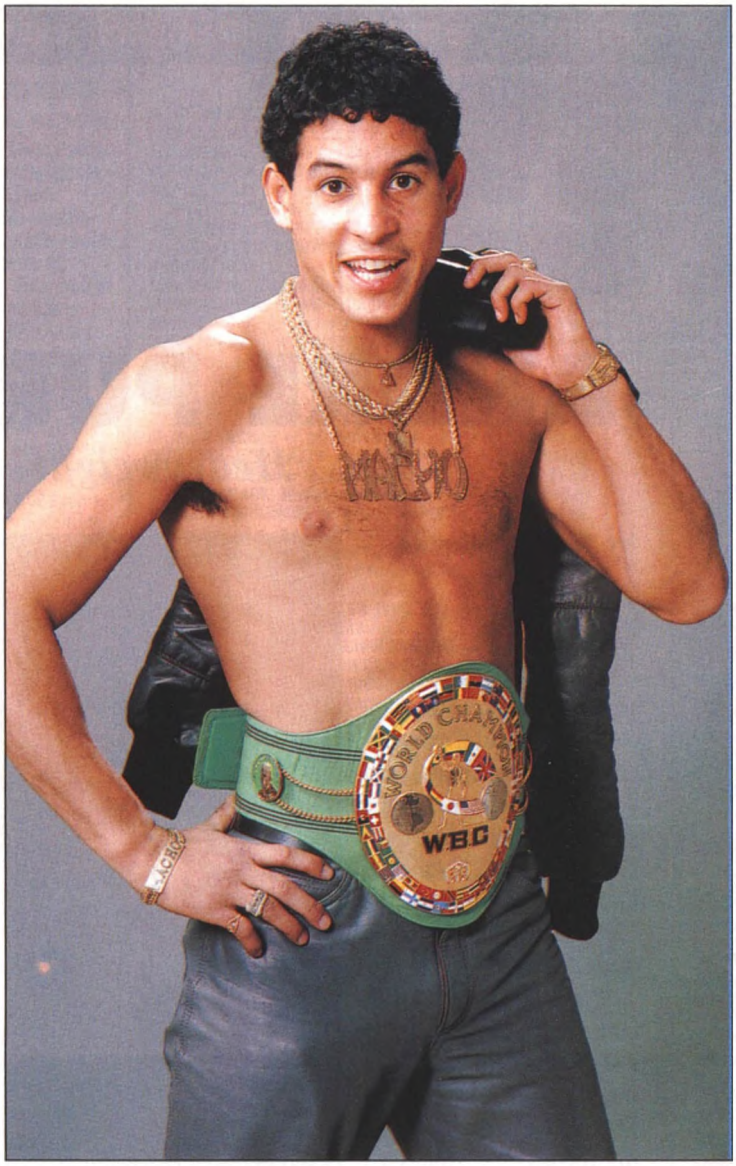
Hector Jr. did nothing to enhance the family name

Well, things didn't turn out quite the way they were supposed to, did they? Heck, with his cut-and-run act, Camacho did more to confuse us about the definition of a "macho man" than anyone since the Village People. He used the gash over his eye not for motivation, but as a way to escape with a no-contest in a bout that was much too close for his comfort. A bout against Jesse James Leija, who may be someone you wouldn't want to run into beneath the darkened Boardwalk, but who, at age 35, is not exactly Aaron Pryor or Alexis Arguello. Or, for that matter, Kostya Tszyu or Zab Judah.

Obviously, Camacho has been spending too much time getting measured for his crazy ring attire and not enough time paying attention to the sports world around him. If he'd flipped to ESPN or CNN/SI every once in a while, he would have noticed that this is the era of athletic sons not merely upholding the family name, but redefining it.

Barry Bonds and Ken Griffey Jr. are so good, they make their fathers look like minor leaguers by comparison. Hockey's Brett Hull has scored more goals than the old man, who, let's not forget, had 610 of them. Kobe Bryant is so much better than was his father, "Jellybean Joe," that he doesn't even appear to be playing the same game. And Robbie Knievel jumps a motorcycle farther with his hands off the handlebars than dad Evel did when he was hanging on.

And Macho Lite? He must have not wanted to upstage Daddy's latest walk in the Jurassic Park with Roberto Duran. Say what you want about the flaws, failings, and wasted opportunities of Camacho Sr. (and we certainly have said plenty through the years), but when he was on the way up, the man always knew how to act like a star when the situation demanded it. One night in 1983, Hector Sr. filled his prefight profile with outrageous quotes about the joys of street violence, then went out and mugged Rafael Solis as though he was a lost tourist who'd wandered into the wrong neighborhood.



Camacho Sr. in his prime

The differences between Macho Jr. and Macho Sr. in some ways epitomize the differences between boxing in the '80s and the fight game today. By the time Daddy was the feature attraction on HBO, he had already won a world title, built a huge fan following, and—even though he was a light-hitting 130-pounder—become something of an intimidator. He was assisted in his quest for superstardom, of course, by the fact that so many of his bouts were on CBS and available to the masses.

Junior, on the other hand, is a creature of cable. For his biggest fight to date, HBO wasn't serving as the stage for an established star, but as a replacement for the commercial networks. While once an HBO date was a certification of one's elite status, it is today sometimes just a stepladder toward such status. And even though the box score says he kept his unbeaten record intact, Camacho Jr. sure didn't take any steps upward.

He has been moved carefully, too carefully, and that, too, is a sign of the times. When Senior was coming up, he'd fought the likes of Refugio Rojas, Louie Loy, Johnny Sato, Greg Coverson, John Montes, and Cubanito Perez *before* challenging for a world title. Every one of those fights was a legitimate test in one way or another. Contrast that with Junior, whose promoter, Dan Goossen, likes risky fights about as much as he likes letting his fighters do their own talking during interviews.

Hey, fighters have bad nights, heads clash unexpectedly, and spit happens. But Camacho Jr. didn't look very comfortable against Leija even before getting cut. He seemed to be unnerved by the moment instead of inspired by it. He never established his rhythm and didn't feed off the crowd. And Junior appeared genuinely surprised that Leija was still hungry and tenacious after 13 years in the game. Junior's problem, if we want to call it that, is that he's a nice guy. A family man. Not a night-crawling quote machine like his pop. So he's not going to gain attention with his personality. Only with his fists. That's why he'll need to win a rematch convincingly, or vanquish a top contender impressively, before Tszyu or Judah even have to acknowledge his existence.

Strange place that Coney Island. Countless people have been hurt diving off a pier into surf that appears deep but isn't. The famous roller coaster, The Cyclone, looks like a rickety old pile of toothpicks—until you climb aboard and lose your lunch. And the sword swallower doesn't actually swallow the sword. He just makes you think that he did. Yes, Coney Island's history is one of things not being what they seem. And on a July night in a little ballpark built beside the ocean, Hector Camacho Jr. looked a lot like a kid who was more glitter than guts, more flash than fury, and more hype than hope.

For his sake, and that of a family name in need of rehabilitation, we'll hope that, too, was just an illusion. ■

NEW FACES

ANDRE PURLETT

Heavyweight

By Joe Santoliquito

There were no cotton fields, no barking bosses strolling around with shotguns slung over their shoulders, straw hats on their heads, and whips in their hands. In the sweltering heat of South Florida, though, it sure felt like the deep South of the 1700s to budding pro Andre "Stone" Purlett.

It was instead just a vast farm filled with various animals that Purlett was responsible for feeding, while living with and working for his first American manager, Mitchell Bridges. It was part of his boxing training, Purlett thought, as were taking out the garbage and mowing the lawn. Purlett, fresh from Guyana and trying to make his way in America, had no point of reference as to how pro fighters trained in the United States. Consequently, he never questioned anything.

Being a successful pro was the reason why Purlett moved by himself in 1995 from the poverty-stricken Georgetown, Guyana, environment he used to call home. But receiving only $400 per fight and feeding deer was only a reminder of where he came from, so Purlett decided to leave Bridges for something better.

Six years later, Purlett has arrived. The 6'2", 220-pound heavyweight has an impressive 31-0 (28) record, although it's been built primarily against weak opposition. But his second-round knockout of the once-formidable Jimmy Thunder on July 6 in Reno, Nevada, certainly helped Purlett's stock rise. And over time, so too has Purlett's wariness when it comes to how the boxing business works.

When Purlett came to the United States from Guyana, he left behind his parents and

(Continued on page 62)

PRO RECORD

1992		
Dec. 26	Ellis Alberts, Georgetown, Guyana	KO 1
1993		
Feb. 28	Leon O'Neal, Georgetown	KO 1
Sept. 18	Colin Murray, Georgetown	KO 1
Oct. 1	Vidal Rawlins, Georgetown	W Disq. 4
Nov. 7	Ivor Simmonds, Georgetown	KO 2
1994		
Feb. 22	George Allison, Georgetown	KO 8
June 26	Tim St. Clair, Georgetown	KO 2
Oct. 16	Faustino Gonzalez, Georgetown	KO 2
1995		
Feb. 25	David Fields, Georgetown	KO 2
1996		
March 26	Fred Adams, Imokalee, FL	KO 2
April 26	Willie Driver, Miami, FL	KO 5
July 29	Stanley Hughey, Miami	KO 1
Aug. 30	Bill Medei, Miami	KO 1
Nov. 23	Elton Singleton, Hollywood, FL	KO 4
1997		
Feb. 21	Ken McCurdy, Miami	KO 1
March 14	Oscar Silva, Miami	KO 1
April 10	Kenneth Myers, Norfolk, VA	KO 3
April 25	Ed Mosley, Miami	KO 3
July 29	Frankie Hines, Nashville, TN	KO 2
Aug. 9	Ken Moody, Miami	KO 2
Nov. 15	Jeff Williams, Miami	KO 6
1998		
Oct. 16	Cliff Nellon, Fort Lauderdale, FL	W 4
Dec. 5	Fred Houpe, Miami	KO 2
1999		
May 21	Andre Sherrod, Greensboro, NC	KO 1
June 18	Dean Moore, Ocala, FL	KO 4
2000		
June 23	Louis Gallucci, Tampa, FL	KO 1
July 29	Onebo Maxime, Tunica, MS	KO 3
Aug. 12	Garing Lane, Miami	W 6
2001		
Feb. 10	Craig Payne, Miami	KO 2
May 1	Muhammad Raheem, Memphis, TN	KO 3
July 6	Jimmy Thunder, Reno, NV	KO 2

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
31	31	0	0	28

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- Marciano's KOs Walcott
- Robinson slugs Gavilan
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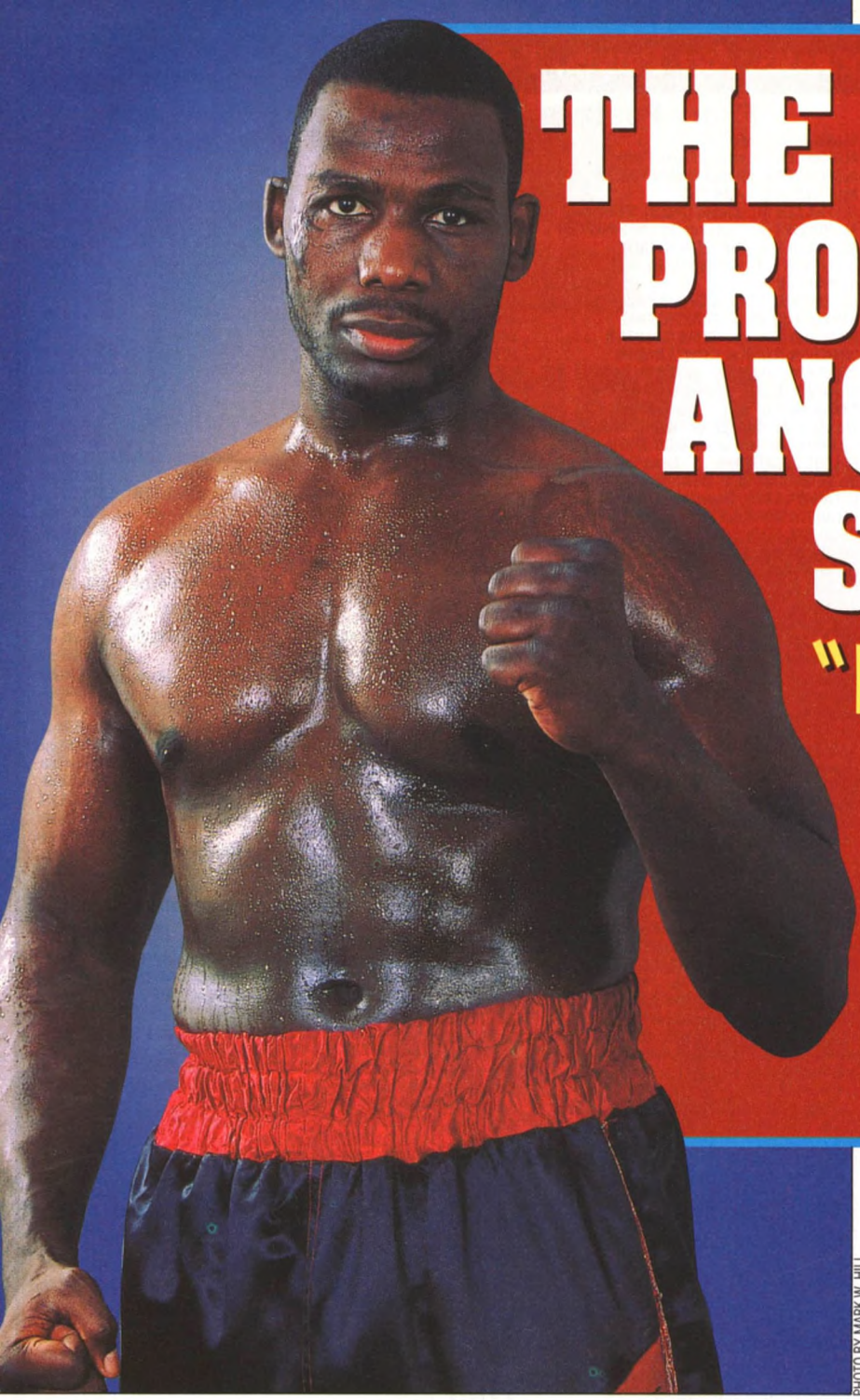

PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

THE ROCK PROMISES ANOTHER SHOCK!

"I'm Gonna Knock Lennox Out Again!"

By Nigel Collins

Perhaps the most curious thing about Hasim Rahman's one-punch knockout of Lennox Lewis was that most of us refused to believe the numerous harbingers of doom that surrounded the Englishman like a flock of vultures during the weeks leading up to the fight. Clearly, our preconceived notion that Lewis was a superior fighter, regardless of his cavalier approach to preparation, overwhelmed common sense.

So we watched, mouths collectively agape, as an upset we should have seen coming played out in front of our eyes. Now, in the lucid light of hindsight, it all seems so obvious. Of course Lewis' half-hearted training camp and late arrival in South Africa contributed to his downfall. And yes, Rahman is obviously a vastly better fighter than many had previously thought. How silly of us to disregard all the tell-tale signs.

So how come so many people automatically assume "The Rock" will lose the rematch?

It seems that some things shake up our presumptions to such an extent, we refuse to believe our eyes. Don King spoke about this phenomenon at a recent New York press conference, where he displayed giant photographs of Rahman's title-winning knockout. Like a pedantic teacher instructing a class of six-year-olds, the bombastic promoter pointed first to Lewis crumpled on the canvas, then to Rahman raising his arms in victory, explaining that this meant that Rahman was the winner and new heavyweight champion.

King's motive for stating the obvious was a negotiating tactic, aimed at taking some of the arrogance out of Lewis' rematch demands. Apparently, Lewis was

acting as if he's still champion, and the promoter wanted to set the record straight. Still, much of the same dynamic is at work among those who still can't bring themselves to give Rahman the respect he earned by icing Lewis. But any intelligent analysis of the rematch has to look at what happened in Johannesburg with unbiased eyes, unclouded by outdated assumptions.

The most widely held belief among those who think Lewis will regain the title when he fights Rahman again on November 10 is exemplified by Claude Abrams, editor of the British weekly, *Boxing News*.

"Even though I wouldn't be surprised if Rahman knocks him out again, I'd have to make Lewis a strong favorite. I can't believe he'll make the same mistakes again," said Abrams, who was ringside in Johannesburg for the first fight. "This time, Lennox will have the bit between his teeth. He'll train harder."

Not surprisingly, Rahman scoffs at such a suggestion.

"So what if Lewis trains?" the champion asked. "Is that really going to make a difference? Do they think if I hit him with the same right hand that he's not going to sleep?"

The right to the chin that ended Lewis' reign was as close to a perfect punch as you'll ever see, but some people still don't want to give Rahman full recognition. Even though Lewis has only been stopped twice in 41 pro bouts, the quality of his chin has been questioned ever since Oliver McCall TKO'd him in 1994, which made it easy to blame the swoon in South Africa on his supposedly fragile jaw. Obviously, a lot of folks forget that the Englishman has withstood some pretty good wallops from Ray Mercer, Shannon Briggs, and Evander Holyfield since the first McCall bout.

"I don't think Lewis has a great chin, but he's got a good chin," said Abrams. "I think his problem is that he doesn't have great powers of recovery. When Larry Holmes or Muhammad Ali got knocked down, they got back up and were usually winning again by the end of the round. Lewis can't do that."

Abrams' insightful assessment of Lewis' mandible notwithstanding, the reluctance to accept Rahman as a dominant champion is based as much on Rahman's perceived deficiencies as it is Lewis'. It's an attitude The Rock is having difficulty accepting.

"I've even heard people call me a journeyman," said Rahman, his voice rising with righteous indignation. "Where they get that from, I don't know. Personally, I believe I beat one of the best young heavyweights out there in David Tua. I had one setback, against Oleg Maskaev, when I definitely wasn't in shape. But regardless, excuses are out the window. Give him that fight. I lost one fight. So is Lennox a journeyman? Is Mike Tyson a journeyman? These guys lost fights, too. Where do these people get this stuff from? They refuse to give me the credit, but all they are doing is fueling a dangerous man."

That Rahman is dangerous is not really in question anymore. It's just that a lot of

fans and insiders alike think Lewis is capable of doing much better than he did the first time. If Lewis, 38-2-1 (29), did indeed underestimate Rahman, he sure as hell isn't going to do it again. Those who believe Lewis will beat Rahman in the return bout envision a better conditioned, highly motivated version outboxing his former conqueror from the outside in much the same manner he did Holyfield and Tua.

"Lennox will box very carefully," said Abrams. "He's always fought scared, and he's not going to change his style now."

Rahman, 35-2 (29), couldn't agree more.

"Lewis isn't going to come out and throw a whole gang of punches this time, because he's still going to run into a jab

PHOTO BY BRIAN CANNON/DKP

Yes, folks, it really happened. Rahman displays photographs of his title-winning kayo of Lennox Lewis at a New York City press conference. "The Rock" doesn't understand why some people refuse to give him the credit he deserves for springing such a major upset.

SECOND VERSE SAME AS THE FIRST?

Thirteen times in boxing history, the heavyweight champion of the world has defended his title against the man from whom he won it. Of those 13 bouts, nine were won by the defending champ. Rahman has to like those numbers. The following is a listing of those 13 matches and rematches, determined using the following guidelines: Only fights in which the true, linear title was at stake were considered (no Dokes vs. Weaver nonsense), and only series in which the rematch came during that same title reign qualified (no Ali-Frazier II and III).

Liston kayoed Patterson in one round in Chicago (above), then did the same again in Las Vegas (right)

TITLE CHANGES HANDS	WHAT HAPPENED IN THE REMATCH
Jim Jeffries KO 11 Bob Fitzsimmons (6-9-1899)	Jeffries KO 8 Fitzsimmons (7-25-1902)
Gene Tunney W 10 Jack Dempsey (9-23-26)	Tunney W 10 Dempsey (9-22-27)
Max Schmeling W Disq. 4 Jack Sharkey (6-12-30)	Sharkey W 15 Schmeling (6-21-32)
Ezzard Charles W 15 Jersey Joe Walcott (6-22-49)	Charles W 15 Walcott (3-7-51)
Jersey Joe Walcott KO 7 Ezzard Charles (7-18-51)	Walcott W 15 Charles (6-5-52)
Rocky Marciano KO 13 Jersey Joe Walcott (9-23-52)	Marciano KO 1 Walcott (5-15-53)
Ingemar Johansson KO 3 Floyd Patterson (6-26-59)	Patterson KO 5 Johansson (6-20-60)
Floyd Patterson KO 5 Ingemar Johansson (6-20-60)	Patterson KO 6 Johansson (3-13-61)
Sonny Liston KO 1 Floyd Patterson (9-25-62)	Liston KO 1 Patterson (7-22-63)
Muhammad Ali KO 7 Sonny Liston (2-25-64)	Ali KO 1 Liston (5-25-65)
Leon Spinks W 15 Muhammad Ali (2-15-78)	Ali W 15 Spinks (9-15-78)
Michael Spinks W 15 Larry Holmes (9-21-85)	Spinks W 15 Holmes (4-19-86)
Riddick Bowe W 12 Evander Holyfield (11-13-92)	Holyfield W 12 Bowe (11-6-93)

PHOTO BY ANTHONY NESTE/HBO

David Tua is on the receiving end of Rahman's jab during their controversial bout in 1998. Rahman claims that the jab is the key to his success and will pave the way to another victory over Lewis.

that's harder than his jab," reasoned Rahman. "That's why I outjabbed him. It wasn't that I'm so skilled or that I'm so much faster than these guys. It's because my jab hurts. It shocks them and shuts their offenses down. The fight is going to be won or lost on the jab. He can't outjab me, even if he stays away. My reach is much longer than Holyfield's. Lennox can't just stay on the outside and outjab me. I've got an 84-inch reach. I'm gonna get in there and I'm gonna hit him."

One thing almost everybody agrees upon is that Rahman won't have the element of surprise going for him in the rematch. Lewis might have been caught off-guard in South Africa, but is now painfully aware of what he's up against. Rahman, however, believes it won't make any difference.

"The fact remains that I have the harder jab," he insisted. "He cannot change that. If you check the record, everybody I fight, their punch-rate goes down. That's simply because my jab stops them. What happened to all the punches these people throw? It's not a coincidence. David Tua was breaking all kinds of PunchStat records. When he fought me, he fought like a little boy. It happens because of my jab. It hurts them; it feels like a right hand. I'm able to control the fight, and whatever lack of experience I have, my jab makes up for it."

There is, of course, always the chance that Lewis will spring a surprise of his own, and come out gunning for a quick knockout. It's not likely, but it's not unprecedented. Just ask Michael Grant or Frans Botha.

"Lennox is in denial about what happened, so he might try the same thing again, come out and try to whack me," ventured Rahman. "But I'm definitely not going for that. But I welcome him to try his hand."

A bombs-away slugfest would certainly please fans, but would it necessarily favor Rahman? It just might turn out to be one of those shootouts where the first man to land a big punch wins. Despite all the talk about Lewis' chin, Rahman hasn't exactly rekindled memories of George Chuvalo. You can discount the Tua loss as a blatant ripoff and blame Rahman's inadequate conditioning for the Maskaev debacle, but his close call against Corrie

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Rahman was down and nearly out in the early going against Corrie Sanders a year before winning the title. Though The Rock came back to win, that fight raised concerns about his chin—concerns Lewis hopes to exploit with his imposing right hand.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Critics who claim that Lewis can't take a punch must have forgotten his March 1998 fight with heavy-fisted Shannon Briggs. After being badly shaken in the first round, the Englishman roared back to stop Briggs in the fifth with a deadly barrage.

Sanders isn't as easy to rationalize.

Although Rahman's exciting seventh-round knockout of Sanders highlighted his courage and determination, he suffered one official knockdown and just barely saved himself from another by grabbing the rope for support. This is the same Corrie Sanders who was starched by Nate Tubbs a few years before Rahman did likewise. But while it's possible that Rahman's chin might let him down, he's not about to fall victim to the same sort of overconfidence that helped turn Lewis into a glassy-eyed zombie.

"I feel that every time I go in the ring, it's a level playing field," said Rahman. "I don't have the attitude that I'm on top. I'm on top when I win a fight, but for that moment only. After that, it's up for grabs."

That's also a much more sensible way of looking at the rematch than the knee-jerk assumption that Lewis is a lock. But don't get the idea that the new champion isn't just as confident as he was the first time.

"It's just like I said in RING magazine before the first fight, 'I'm going to knock Lennox out.' You can just repeat everything I said then, because I still feel the same way," proclaimed a decidedly fired-up Rahman. "I'm gonna knock Lennox out again. It's gonna be another shock."

Only to those who fail to heed the signs. ■

RAHMAN-LEWIS II: STAFF PICKS

Nigel Collins: Rahman KO 10

"If 'The Rock' can do it once, he can do it again, but it will take a little longer this time, mainly because Lewis will be in better shape and even more cautious than he was against David Tua. But Rahman's punch and determination to prove the first fight wasn't a fluke will be the difference."

Eric Raskin: Rahman KO 2

"There are about a dozen different scenarios I can envision, and Lewis is victorious in several of them, but the most likely one is that Rahman tests Lewis' chin early, and the ex-champ fails. It's just so hard to bounce right back from a brutal knockout loss, especially at age 36."

Joe Santoliquito: Lewis W 12

"After receiving one punch in a fight he did little to prepare for, it's funny how Lennox Lewis is all of a sudden ready for the old-folks' home. I don't believe it. Just as he did after the Oliver McCall debacle, Lewis will bounce back from this monumental blunder and train for Rahman the way he should have the first time. Lewis turns this into a slumber party, jabbing his way to a unanimous decision victory."

William Dettloff: Lewis W 12

"Rahman talks like winning the title has made him a better fighter, and he hasn't even made a defense yet. As far as we know, it's just talk. Lewis, meanwhile, while clearly flawed, is still the better fighter. He'll take Rahman seriously this time, keep his chin down, and jab and clinch him into oblivion. It'll be hard on the eyes, but that's the way Lewis likes it and he'll win going away."

Jeff Ryan: Rahman KO 10

"Common sense says Lewis gets into better shape this time, establishes the jab, fights cautiously, and wins a unanimous decision. But as Gil Clancy likes to say, a lot of fighters become instantly better once they win a title, and my hunch is that that will be the case with Rahman. Never underestimate the power of self-confidence—or Rahman's right hand. Look for Lewis to take an early lead, then get Rocked and rolled."

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The Rap On Roy

JONES GIVES US ANOTHER PERFORMANCE TO FORGET

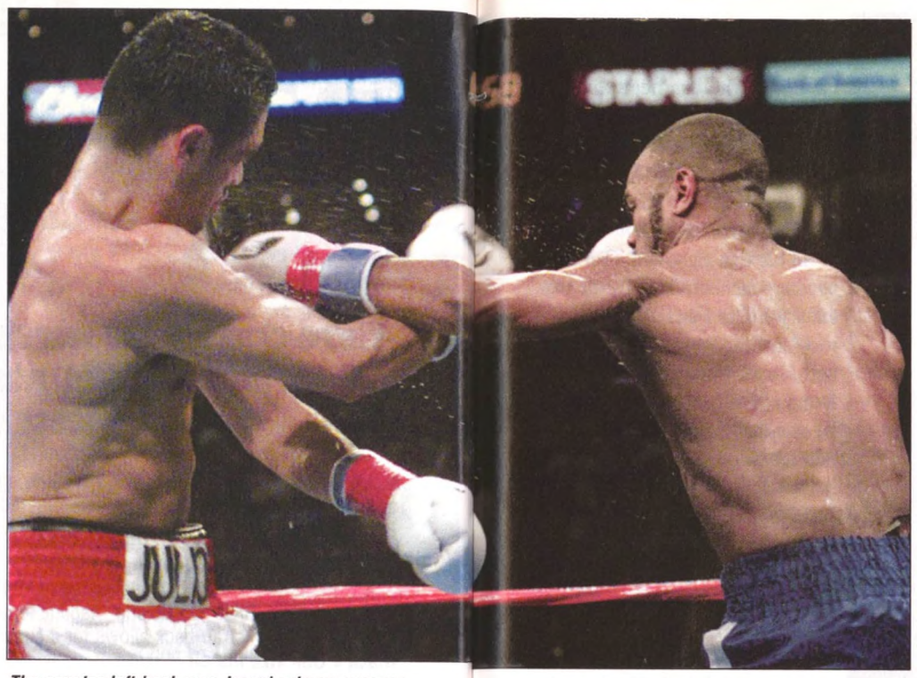
PHOTOS BY CHRIS FARINA

By Johnnie Whitehead

It didn't have to be the way it was. It seldom does with Roy Jones. He could easily have averted the boos that accompanied his one-sided victory over Julio Gonzalez. All he had to do was give just a little bit more. It wouldn't have taken much, just a few more punches at one of the numerous times he had his outclassed rival in trouble. But instead of putting the finishing touches on what could have been a minor masterpiece, it was almost as if he wanted to hand his critics additional ammunition. Or maybe he was trying to find something else to whine about on his next rap record.

Jones has defended the light heavyweight title successfully nine times since 1998, but not one of them has been competitive or substantially entertaining. Nor has he shown the passion we appreciate in our sporting kings, and that includes his recent blistering of Gonzalez on July 28 at Los Angeles' Staples Center.

We are no closer to solving the enigma known as "Reluctant Roy" than we were prior to the Gonzalez fight. But while many among the surprisingly large crowd of 20,406 were plainly disappointed, others are clearly enamored.



The counter left hook was Jones' primary weapon against Julio Gonzalez, accounting for knockdowns in the first and fifth rounds. As good as Jones is as a counterpuncher, his reluctance to lead is preventing him from living up to his full potential.

"He has God-given talent, hand speed, power, all-around ability," said Harold Lederman, HBO's unofficial scorekeeper. "He dominates a fight. He wins every minute of every round. The guy is so far invincible. You can't take anything away from him."

His most recent performance was no different in that regard. Jones, who continues to defy logic by getting faster as he gets older, owned Gonzalez. He ripped him with a lead left in the first round that was so swift that slow-motion replays were needed to confirm it was a hook and that it actually landed. Gonzalez probably wondered the same while he was sprawled on the canvas counting the pink elephants. Jones found the mark again in the fifth, as another hook deposited the game challenger on the canvas. In the 12th, Gonzalez went down a third time after he walked into a right. In each instance, Jones failed to capitalize.

It surely would've been more humane to put Gonzalez, 27-1 (17), out of his misery—and certainly more entertaining—but Jones, 45-1 (36), would much rather beat a man like a dirty rug. He'd rather play with his food than tear it to shreds and devour it.

"He fought with a little bit more passion for the first six or seven rounds, and then he just glided into the 12th and took what was there," said HBO analyst Merchant. "That's the reason people are sometimes disappointed in him."

Maybe it's a matter of taste, not necessarily talent, that governs Jones' actions and our conclusions. Though Jones rarely delivers eye-catching knockouts, should he be degraded for carrying opponents? Back in the days when Jones wanted to knock someone goofy, he did. Remember when he destroyed capable Thomas Tate inside of two rounds? Or Montell Griffin in less than one? But it's been so long since he's blown anyone out, you can't help but wonder if he's forgotten how.

Jones frequently rocked Gonzalez with lunging right hands, but he rarely pressed his advantage. The result was a crowd of over 20,000 at the Staples Center in Los Angeles booing throughout the second half of Jones' unanimous decision win.

It was as if Gonzalez was a helpless field mouse who fell into every trap that was set by the slick, cat-quick champion. But for reasons maybe even Jones doesn't fully understand, Gonzalez was still around to hear Mike Buffer read the scores of 119-107 and 119-106 (twice) handed in by Larry Rozadilla, Robert Byrd, and Peter Trematerra, respectively.

The 6'2" Gonzalez, a hard-nosed and determined pug who wins with heart more so than talent, negated his three-inch height advantage by tossing out a lazy, singular jab and running head first into a master counterpuncher.

"It's a combination of speed and power," Gonzalez said of being knocked down three times. "I was fine. I knew before the fight I wasn't going to be stopped."

But only the Iraqi Army could've been incompetent enough to

Referee Raul Caiz gives Gonzalez the count as the determined Californian tries to shake off the effects of Jones' blinding powershots. As he did in his awesome war with Julian Letterlough back in February, Gonzalez rose from three knockdowns to hear the final bell.

miss such an easy mark. When it was over, Jones had landed 57 percent of his power-punches, and all Gonzalez had to show for his efforts was the pride in knowing he was still standing. He almost didn't make it when Jones' right-hand bomb floored him in the 12th. But when he survived, it ignited the restless crowd for the first time since the ninth round. The fans rallied behind Gonzalez, who immediately jumped on Jones, only to be frozen with a counter left hook. Just a stiff wind was needed to topple him for good, but Jones either couldn't or wouldn't. Instead, he allowed Gonzalez to engage him in the most thrilling trade of the fight, which at least closed the show on a high note.

"I knew the guy was capable of going 12 rounds," said Jones. "That's why I got in shape. If I would've pulled a Lennox Lewis and not been in shape, there would've been a new champion."

Maybe.

Trying to understand what goes on inside of Jones' head is about as easy as figuring him out in the ring. He is furlongs ahead of his contemporaries, but what will he do when he meets an opponent who can neutralize his skills and force him to call on the inner qualities that make a true Hall of Famer? Will Jones stand and fight like a warrior or turn into Hector Camacho Jr.?

In his first fight with Griffin, a counterpuncher trained by the legendary Eddie Futch, the now all-too-familiar Reluctant Roy was born. Jones was afraid to lead, and found himself in a close fight, one he eventually lost via disqualification for twice hitting Griffin while he was on the floor. It was another ambiguous showing when Jones faced Eric Harding, a solid but unspectacular pro of 20 fights who had registered only six knockouts. Harding actually outfeinted Jones, who would admit later he was wary of the southpaw's attempt to make him lead and counter with a right hook.

Where Jones' madness doesn't add up is that neither Griffin nor Harding are dangerous punchers. Neither is Otis Grant, a middleweight moving up 15 pounds whom Jones carried 10 rounds. Neither were Derrick Harmon and Richard Hall, who lasted 10 and 11 rounds, respectively. In fact, if you pay attention to the spots during which Gonzalez didn't punch, particularly in the 10th round, Jones didn't either. He's simply not confident or comfortable initiating, and when he does, Jones can look, well, human.

Felix Trinidad and Bernard Hopkins may not be as big as the lugs Jones has been feasting on as of late, but they're certainly a heck of a lot more skilled and could expose Jones' weakness.

Prior to the Gonzalez fight, Jones secured the services of promoter Bob Arum in hopes of building himself into a bigger pay-per-view attraction. Arum did his part by setting reasonable ticket prices, which helped lure a huge crowd to witness what amounted to a public flogging. But Jones didn't do his part to make future PPVs sell any easier.

Jones pitches paint jobs with such uncanny brilliance that fans are no longer entertained. They loved the bolo right that jolted Gonzalez in the ninth round and had him in the verge of being stopped, but Jones decided to get cute. He turned lefty, and got caught with a hook in transition, which killed his momentum. We just have to come to grips with the fact that Jones will never have the style of, say, Felix Trinidad or Shane Mosley; he simply doesn't have their temperament.

Jones' outside-of-the-ring persona is almost as frustrating as his fighting methods. One minute he can be an affable and engaging subject who carries himself as fluidly as he throws a left hook. The next he's standoffish, surly, and speaking of himself in the third-person, a self-absorbed hotshot with a chip on his shoulder clamoring for respect while going through the motions to earn it.

At the Gonzalez postfight press conference, the best of Jones was on display. Though still super confident, he was witty rather than defiant, and he handled himself with poise. He didn't issue any ultimatums or give a condescending lecture about his greatness and how the world should bow to him. Maybe that's because he got his frustrations off his chest when HBO bankrolled a music video for his rap single, "Y'All Must've Forgot."

When asked what it would take for him to cross the Atlantic to meet Joe Calzaghe, who is recognized by many as the best super middleweight in the world, Jones stroked his chin gently and said firmly: "A lot of money. If I'm the best here, why should I go there? If he wants it bad enough, come and get it. I got something he wants. He's got one belt, I've got seven."

When asked about fighting the winner of the middleweight tournament, Jones admitted that his eagerness had originally got the best of him.

"At first I was a little bit selfish," he said of when Trinidad called him out about a year ago. "I wanted it to happen *then*. But I thought about it, and I said, 'No, this may be one of the biggest events to ever happen in boxing in a long time. So let's just capitalize on it.'"

Unappreciated as much as he is talented, Jones seems relieved that his defining moment could be right around the corner.

"Now, I get back to where I belong," Jones said, his eyes lighting up at the prospect of being a super middle again. "You think I'm fast now? Y'all must've forgot."

No we haven't, Roy. And that's part of the problem. Everybody recalls the unlimited potential you showed in the Olympics and throughout much of the first half of your pro career. Now it's up to you to give us something new worth remembering. ■

Johnnie Whitehead is an editor at USA Today and a regular contributor to this magazine.

Jones needs several members of his posse to help him carry his extensive collection of belts. And as long as Jones keeps fighting second-rate opposition, those belts aren't going anywhere. It remains to be seen if he will fight the Felix Trinidad-Bernard Hopkins winner next.

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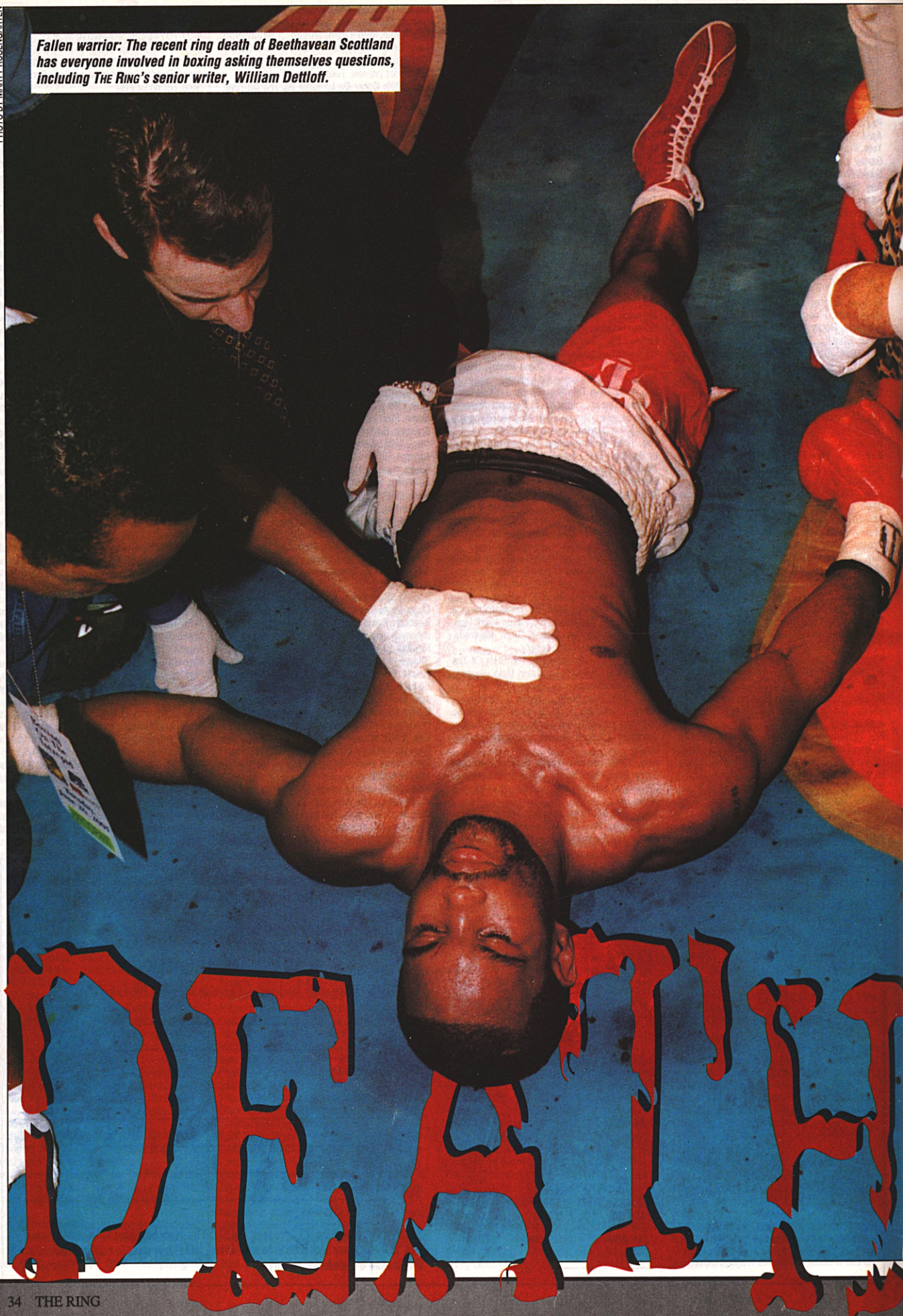


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Fallen warrior: The recent ring death of Beethavean Scottland has everyone involved in boxing asking themselves questions, including THE RING*'s senior writer, William Dettloff.*

A Boxing Writer's Toughest Assigment

Whenever a boxer dies of injuries suffered in the ring, the tragedy has a profound effect on everybody involved. While the fighters and those closest to them are hit the hardest, the journalists who cover their careers are not immune to the emotional turmoil that accompanies such catastrophes. What follows is one writer's personal account of the inner struggle all of us who love the Sweet Science must wrestle with whenever a fighter sacrifices his life on the altar of his art.

By William Dettloff

By all accounts, Beethavean Scottland was a good guy. After he died, people said he was a decent man, a family man. As fighters go, he wasn't that special. He was tough all right, the sort of guy who could take it probably a little better than he could give it. His toughness was what he was proudest of. You could see it in the way he fought, how he'd take a shot or two or three flush and just stare at the other guy. He liked to show it off.

Lots of fighters are like that, when tough is all they've got, more or less, but Scottland showed it too much against George "Khalid" Jones in June. Right or wrong, no one around him convinced him that sometimes it's not so good to be tough, that sometimes too much tough will get you into deep trouble. They let him be as tough as he wanted, and after he went down in the 10th round, he didn't get up. He died a few days later in Bellevue Hospital in New York, and I thought it was ironic and a little sad that a hell of a lot of fight writers, myself included, knew his name then, but didn't when he was alive. But that's the way it is: A fighter dies, he gets press. Someone has to cover it, and fight writers have to eat, too.

Guys in the fight press watch fighters get killed in the ring. Beaten to death, if you want to be damned honest about it. In a sense, we participate in it. All of the industry does, anyone who makes money in the business. We write about it—as well as we can, really, because why should the writing suffer? We go at it with great understated flourish (we hope), with dark prose so the tone is flat and respectful and reads like a soft obituary almost. We eulogize the guy if we knew him at all, talk him up, share a revealing anecdote—but not too revealing—and maybe appeal to fans to send his kids a few bucks because you know the guy was broke.

Maybe in a fit of melancholia we'll question right there on the page why this dirty business is legal at all and what's wrong with us all for watching it. Maybe it's just for the sake of the piece that we do it, maybe it isn't, but it's done now, we put a period at the end, give it a last read, and off it goes. Next?

At least that's how it works for me. I can get reasonably close for a while, in a literary sense, to a fighter who has been killed in the ring. I can write the piece. But I like not to. It does him no good if I get very close, and it certainly doesn't help me. Better, more courageous writers than I, and there are many, have gotten right next to Benny Paret and Willie Classen and Jimmy Garcia, crawled up right beside them on the slab and gotten their stories, gotten so close they could hear the whispered secrets, and they made the reader know the fighter. Forced them to know the fighter in life and in death. Not for me, thanks; that's too close, especially if the guy left kids behind. No, let the other guys do the death operas. They'll line up for them. Sportswriters, fight guys included, get bored writing just about sports; it's all so trivial. But throw a good death into the mix, especially in the melodrama that is pro boxing, and you have the makings of a Pulitzer. It'll be the best they've ever written.

It's not that I fear that if I get close to the story of a killed fighter that somehow I'll find the business too repugnant to cover any longer. It is true, I think, that there's a certain desensitization that one needs to undergo in order to get involved to a great degree in this game, a sort of screen one must erect that sifts through and separates what is acceptable violence—one fighter striking another in the face—and unacceptable violence, the kind that might make us look away at the moment of impact or attempt to intercede, if we can: a fight in the street between laymen, for example, that is wholly one-sided and instigated by the more menacing of the two and that you can see promises to end badly. All punches to the face are not equal.

To many outside the game, the two scenarios are equally abhorrent. To the fight fan, only the latter is, and that's not even a given. Our "screen" allows for the former; relishes it even. We learn to distinguish between the two, even if fundamentally there is no significant difference.

So it's not that subconsciously I'm repulsed by the violence and keep its worst result at arms' length lest I face my worst demons and be forced to reconsider vocations. (That would indeed be a challenging undertaking.) I don't apologize a lick for the fight game, nor for my involvement in it, ancillary or not. Why should I? Guys who cover auto racing have no qualms I've ever heard after they watch and cover drivers getting burned to a fine crisp inside their racing suits. I don't know of any daily sportswriters who quit the high school football beat because of all the 17-year-old kids who drop dead in the middle of August scrimmages. They accept, I suppose, that it's going to happen sometimes. That's what we all should do.

I know, the fight game is held to a different standard, probably for no better rea-

Dettloff recalls seeing the tragic demise of Willie Classen on the evening news when he was still a kid. What seemed so abstract back then is now all too real, especially for somebody involved in the business, even in a peripheral role.

son than we can see the fighter's eyes right up until the last second there's a light in them. In these other high-risk arenas, a helmet covers the face, and even if it didn't, the activity precludes a close-up. You can't get close enough to the athlete's eyes to see inside of him. Not so in the ring. Boxing is very viewer-friendly. That's one of its allures. No uniform. No helmet, at least in the pros. Close-ups galore; before the first bell, getting referee's instructions, between rounds, taking a punch. Slow motion was made for the fight game.

If a fighter took a few stitches over the eye or in the middle of his forehead after he fell off of his bike when he was nine, you can see the scar. (He'll probably tell you the story if you ask him.) If he misses his mother who died when he was 11, you know her name because you can see it tattooed on his arm, or across his back, or maybe stitched into his trunks. If you believe every man has a soul, you can see that in the ring too. Watch Johnny Tapia sometime, and you can see what is in his heart and his gut, for better or worse. He can't help but reveal it in the ring. He doesn't have a choice. It's all laid out for you.

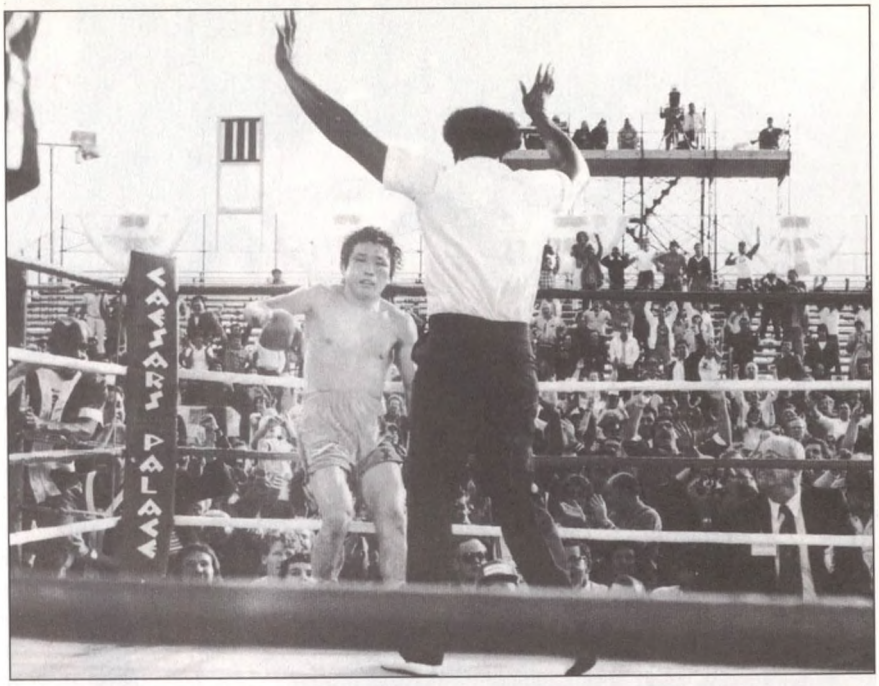
There can be no pretense when so much of a man is laid open like that, and when there is so much life in him, moving, pivoting, punching, ducking, sweating. And then, when he is tougher than he should be and all that life suddenly stops, it's like his battery just ran out, and then you realize it didn't just run out for no good reason. It was pounded on and pummeled and stepped on until it went crooked and bent and shorted out and it just couldn't work anymore. But know this: If not for the purity of purpose, you wouldn't be watching. What makes it compelling is the same thing that makes it terrible. You can't have one without the other. You can try to minimize the risk, but after a certain point you're only watering down the spirits. There must be risk. Without risk and danger there is no compelling reason to watch—or to do.

The first fighter I saw get killed in the ring was Classen. I watched Wilford Scypion pound the life out of him on the 11:00 news. I was a kid. I had read about Paret, of course, had seen that famous still of Emile Griffith pounding him into the bare metal ringpost. (How could there be no padding around the ringposts?) There were others I'd read about—Ernie Schaaf, Sam Baroudi. But they were before my time. Scypion looked to me like probably the most evil person on the earth, he seemed to so enjoy torturing poor Classen, but how could he know what would happen? Or maybe he knew and didn't care, and we couldn't blame him if he didn't. That's why we watch.

Classen, a hard-luck fighter who never was going to be a champion, a lot like Scottland, took a hard beating, and then just completely swallowed four or five rattling shots to the head before finally col-

lapsing and falling through the ropes onto his back. His face looked flat to me all of a sudden, and blank. Then the clip ended, Warner Wolf said something about an investigation, and it was over.

Three years later, Deuk Koo Kim had that same strange, blank look when Ray Mancini killed him in Las Vegas. Watched that one from beginning to end, but I didn't really get it, not fully, when they strapped Kim down and hurriedly carried him off. It was television. It was real, but it wasn't. Not like professional wrestling unreal, but not quite like real-life real. Classen and Kim were dead in the way the German soldiers were dead in the old black and white World War II movies my dad forever had on the television; something called dead, whatever that really was. Gone for good or something. I was a kid with a fuzzy understanding of dead, made more distant because it was on TV.



Perhaps the most publicized ring fatality in boxing history was that of Deuk Koo Kim in 1982. His death, at the hands of then-WBA lightweight champion Ray Mancini, was seen by millions of TV viewers on CBS.

A couple of years ago, Paul Vaden poked Stephan Johnson with a harmless-looking left jab in the 10th round of their fight in Atlantic City. Johnson had taken and given harder punches than that all night and was giving Vaden a good tussle. But after taking this almost apologetic jab, he stumbled slowly backward, then slid down the ropes and fell on his left side. He lay there a long while. I watched from the other side of the ring, diagonal from him, as his life ran out. Shortly a bunch of people crowded around him and huddled over him, and then a bright yellow stretcher was forced through the ropes. They hoisted him onto it.

Another famous ring death was that of Benny "Kid" Paret, who was mortally wounded in his 1962 welterweight championship bout with Emile Griffith at Madison Square Garden. It too was broadcast on national television and caused a public uproar.

Right outside the ring there was a young woman, hysterical, an older woman next to her trying to calm her and not succeeding. I presumed the younger one was Johnson's wife, and I tried to imagine what it was like to be her at that moment. I got just a taste, then stopped, looked away from her and soaked in the Atlantic City Convention Center. A Def Leppard song from the 1980s roared from the public address system, oblivious to poor Johnson's state, and in every direction and every corner of the arena, people lied in whispers and drank soda and beer and gossiped loudly and hollered because it was fun and giggled and pointed at one another, and smoked Camels and ate hot dogs and argued money and minutia and loved and hated. They lived.

Later, after the main event (Michael Grant KO 10 Andrew Golota), a gaggle of fight writers weaved their way over to the conference room that would host the post-fight press conference. Along the way, a guy asked if anyone had heard any news on Johnson. A veteran, who has watched a lot of fighters die in the ring, didn't look up, but said softly: "Not good." Nobody said anything for a few beats—a moment of silence?—then someone made a joke about Golota quitting and wasn't it pre-

Some things never change: Two photographs, one from 1948 of Sam Baroudi being taken to the hospital after getting knocked out by Ezzard Charles in Chicago, the other of Stephan Johnson leaving the Atlantic City Convention Center after being stopped by Paul Vaden in 1999. Both Baroudi and Johnson eventually died of their injuries.

dictable for that nut job. The group loosened up and slid comfortably into fight talk: How Grant would do against Lennox Lewis, how Golota could have finished him if he only had the heart of a real fighter. Johnson died a week-and-a-half later.

Unlike pro football and baseball players, fighters generally don't get their asses kissed from the time they're little kids on up. To the contrary, most of them grow up hard, and here's a news flash, they're usually not happy, secure guys because happy, secure people rarely take up and then stick with a hobby as dangerous and desperate and unforgiving as prize fighting. What this hard life and this hard game give them is humility and a desire for attention, a desire to please, and maybe a little pride, but not too much. They've been to places inside themselves that we'll never risk, asked and answered questions we would never dare. But most of them are too humble and naive and beaten down to realize that it makes them better than the rest of us, so they remain humble.

All of this makes many of them, I think, good men, even if they never will be great fighters. But they die sometimes doing that which made them what they were, and if we're lucky, we get to know them a little bit before it happens. That's why fight writers stay with it: the fighters.

That's why I do, even when the life runs out of one of them right in front of me. It's harder now than when Classen and Kim were just images on a screen. I am older and in the business, peripherally. I know some fighters and know that they have lives and families and good reasons to live, just as I do. Perhaps that's why I must keep the death tales at a reasonable distance: If these strong, hard men can die so suddenly, what chance do the rest of us have? What chance do I have?

Resigned, I accept death as part of the game. I don't have a choice. None of us does, least of all the fighters. All we can do is hope someone is there to tell them when they've been tough long enough. ■

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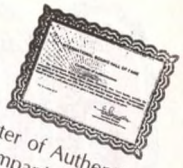

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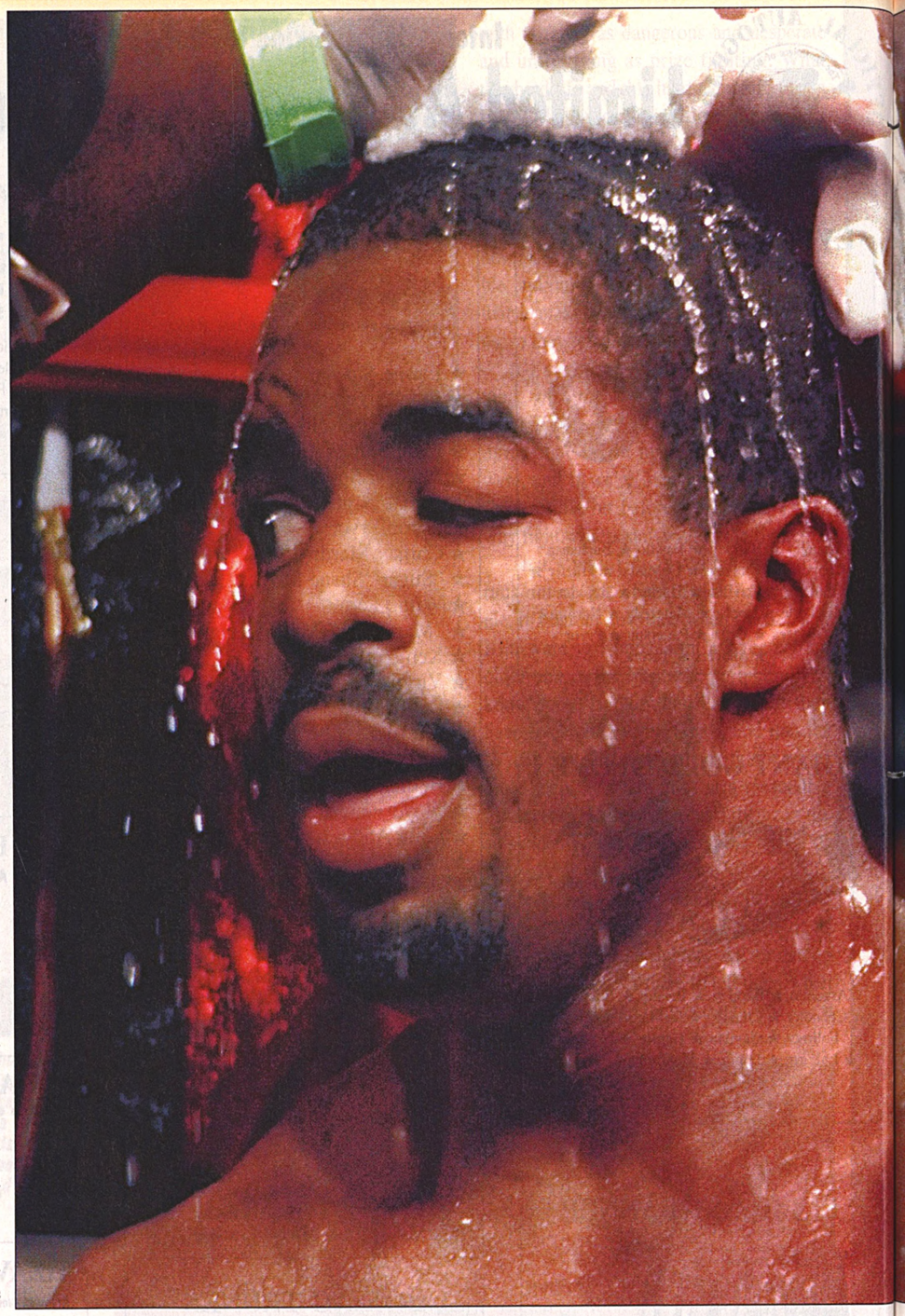

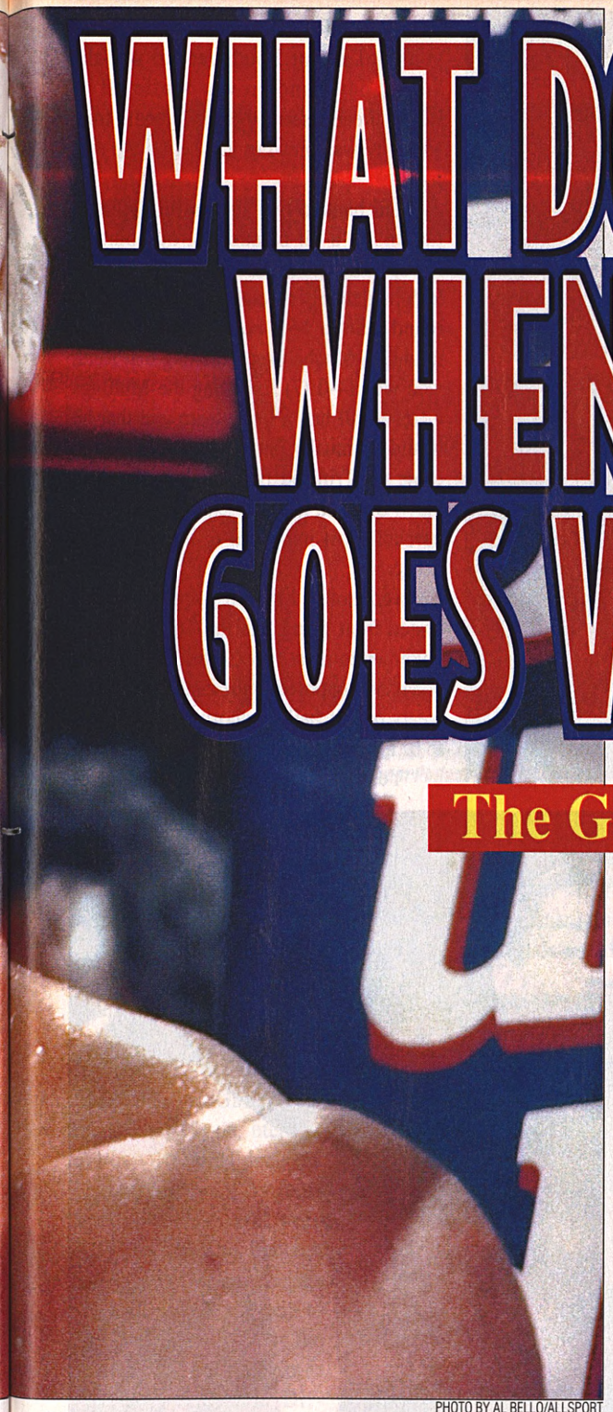

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/ALLSPORT

The smile on David Reid's face was as sunny as the sky on the gorgeous July afternoon THE RING visited him at his home in Voorhees, New Jersey. In many ways, the 1996 Olympic gold medalist and former WBA super welterweight champion has plenty to smile about. He lives in a luxurious four-bedroom house in an upscale neighborhood, drives an expensive SUV, and has won his last three fights. But all of that is of a superficial and transient nature. Underneath the sparkling smile and trappings of affluence, there is a confused and conflicted man, a man who knows that everything he's worked for since he was a boy currently rests upon a foundation as shaky as his legs were after Felix Trinidad turned their March 2000 fight around with a crippling left hook.

Reid showed his visitor around the spacious but mostly empty abode, laughing at the broken doorjamb that leads from the garage into the house. "I've got to get that fixed," he said. "I lost my key and had to break myself in."

The tour ended in the kitchen, where Reid swung open the refrigerator door and selected a couple of plums. "Want something?" he asked. His guest declined, and remarked how spotless the house looked. "Got to keep my place clean," the fighter replied as they settled down to talk.

Unfortunately, the same could not be said for Reid's state of mind, which seems to be a muddy mixture of doubt, anxiety, and indecision. He has, in a few short years, gone from being the darling of the Atlanta Games and a million-dollar-bonus baby to a fighter who is now widely written off as a burnt out has-been. Like many fighters, Reid is not immune to the assessment of his critics.

"Sometimes when I see that they're saying I'm washed-up, I want to fight right away so I can show them that I'm not done," he said. "But now, just like my eye, I'm kind of used to it."

Ah, yes, the eye. That would be Reid's left, the one with the droopy lid, the one that has received even more publicity than the Hail Mary right hand he used to knock out Cuba's Alfredo Duvergel and salvage Olympic gold. Reid has gone under the surgeon's knife numerous times since the Olympics in hopes of repairing the muscle that was originally torn by a punch at the Pan-Am Games. But although he proved wrong the dire predictions that the injury would prematurely end his career, other problems have brought Reid to a point where many observers believe he's one good ass-whupping away from retirement.

While some point to the Trinidad loss as the beginning of Reid's troubles, and others think it all started when he first injured his eye, it's a lot more complicated than that. True, both of those traumatic events have contributed to Reid's fall from grace, but being caught in the middle of a power struggle has also contributed heavily to his current state of affairs.

The battle to control Reid's career goes back even farther than the '95 Pan-Am Games, and has its roots in the grim North Philadelphia neighborhood where he first took up boxing as a youngster at a city-sponsored recreation center. At the time, Al Mitchell owned a small store and trained fighters in his spare time. Over the years, he became much more than Reid's boxing teacher. Mitchell became his surrogate father, spending countless hours with the young boxer away from the gym, watching old fight films, talking about the future, and trying to guide his star pupil away from the temptations of the streets.

Eventually, Mitchell moved to Marquette, Michigan, where he currently runs one of the country's foremost amateur training programs. Reid joined him there for a while, but couldn't get used to the bitter cold winters and small-town atmosphere, and he eventually moved back to Philly. By then, Reid was one of the most promising amateurs in the United States and on the fast track to an Olympic berth. He stayed in constant contact with Mitchell, but the day-to-day training chores were handled by Fred Jenkins, who had previously enjoyed success with former IBF lightweight titlist Charlie "Choo Choo" Brown and junior welterweight contender "Rockin'" Rodney Moore. Jenkins travelled with Reid to tournaments when Mitchell was busy elsewhere, and badgered newspapers to give the local kid some ink.

When Mitchell became head coach of the '96 U.S. Olympic boxing team, and Reid the only member of the squad to win gold, it was a feel-good story. But while Mitchell was negotiating a lucrative professional contract for his pride and joy,

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Reid looked much improved the first five rounds of his bout with Maurice Brantley, and even managed to floor him with a booming right in the third. But Reid faded the second half of the fight and had to settle for a decision victory.

Jenkins was left wondering why his hard work and loyalty weren't being rewarded in equal measure.

"It was a very difficult situation because Al brought me up, and Fred had been there with Al," said Reid, clearly uncomfortable talking about a situation that still reverberates throughout both his professional and personal life. "But Al and Fred couldn't get along with each other. They had their differences from the past. They had grudges. So I was caught in the middle. I was the fighter, and they both needed to work."

Initially, father-figure Mitchell, with his higher profile, intellectual demeanor, and more forceful personality, won out. Jenkins hired on as Reid's cutman, but the seeds of discontent had already been planted and would continue to grow.

Mitchell ran a very tight ship, controlling everything from Reid's opponents to the food he ate in training camp. The eye hampered Reid's advancement, but with Mitchell at the helm, he continued to progress, and in March '99, the fighter known as "The American Dream" outpointed Laurent Boudouani to win the WBA 154-pound crown. While all of Reid's dreams seemed to have come true, adversity was brewing just below the surface.

Reid banked two successful defenses (and quite a bit of money), outpointing Kevin Kelly and Keith Mullings, but didn't look particularly special doing so. His late-round fade in both bouts was especially troubling. Mitchell kept insisting that Reid, who was 14-0 (7) following the Mullings victory, still had a lot to learn and that he would eventually put it all together. Then came the Trinidad fight, which cost Reid the WBA belt, his undefeated record, and, perhaps most important of all, his confidence.

Even though Mitchell helped provide a united front going into the Trinidad bout, unknown to most was the fact that he was adamantly opposed to the match. But Reid, weary of Mitchell's authority and yearning to be his own man, overruled him.

"Yeah, Al did try to talk me out of

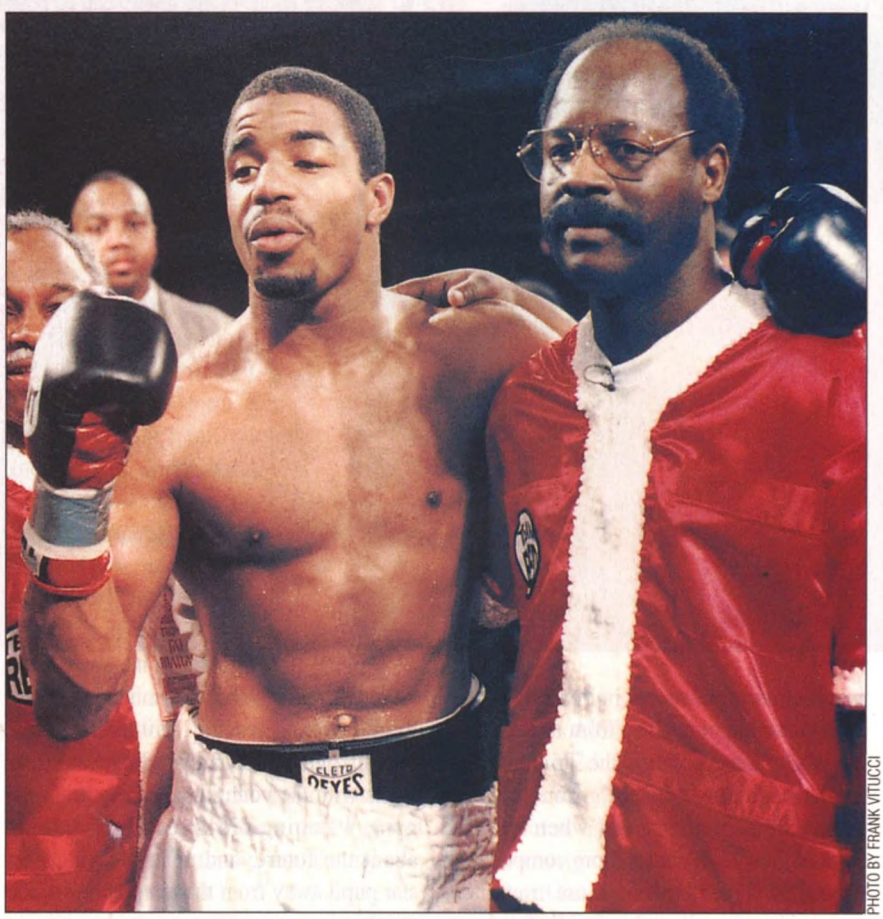

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Reid's split from longtime trainer and father-figure Al Mitchell, the head coach of the '96 Olympic team, is one of many factors that has thrown his career into a state of near-chaos. But despite their professional rift, the two remain friends and talk to each other on a regular basis.

PHOTO BY JASON ROSS LAVIN

Reid is now trained by Fred Jenkins (center), who emerged from a power struggle with Mitchell as the head man in "The American Dream's" corner. Jenkins has been the lead trainer for Reid's last two fights. Pictured with them is Zahir Raheem, another 1996 Olympian from Philadelphia whom Jenkins helped develop.

fighting Trinidad," admitted Reid. "He told me that he didn't like the fight and that I didn't need the fight right then. But I told him I was ready. Al was right, but at that time, I didn't want to listen to him."

Not listening to Mitchell became an even greater problem when Reid launched his comeback in November 2000 against Kirino Garcia. Although he hung on, literally, to win a 10-round decision, Reid was battered by journeyman Garcia and very lucky to get the nod. Between rounds, Mitchell gave sage advice and implored Reid to keep his hands up, but the fighter didn't even appear to be paying attention. Differences between the pair had come to a head, and even Mitchell agreed that if Reid wasn't going to listen to him, there was no point in them working together anymore.

"I didn't seem like I was the CEO of Team Reid when Al was around," is how Reid summed up the split.

But despite the professional rift, the bond between Reid and Mitchell endured, and when Mitchell's son was murdered, Reid's inner turmoil intensified.

"I didn't want to be harsh," said Reid, whose break from Mitchell virtually coincided with the tragedy. "I wanted to stick by Al because his son had died, so bump all the business. I wanted to be by his side. Right now, Al is not part of my career, but we still talk. I don't have nothing against Al. To me, he's a good man."

With Jenkins training him, Reid has won his last two outings, a pair of 10-round decisions over the ordinary duo of Urbano Gurrola and Maurice Brantley. He fought Garcia and Gurrola at middleweight and Brantley at super middle, supposedly because his body-fat ratio was so low at junior middle, he was burning muscle instead of fat. This, according to sports nutritionist Mackie Shilstone and promoter Dan Goossen, was causing Reid, who has always trained diligently, to run out of gas during the second half of his fights. Nonetheless, Reid's performances at the higher weights have not added any credence to this theory.

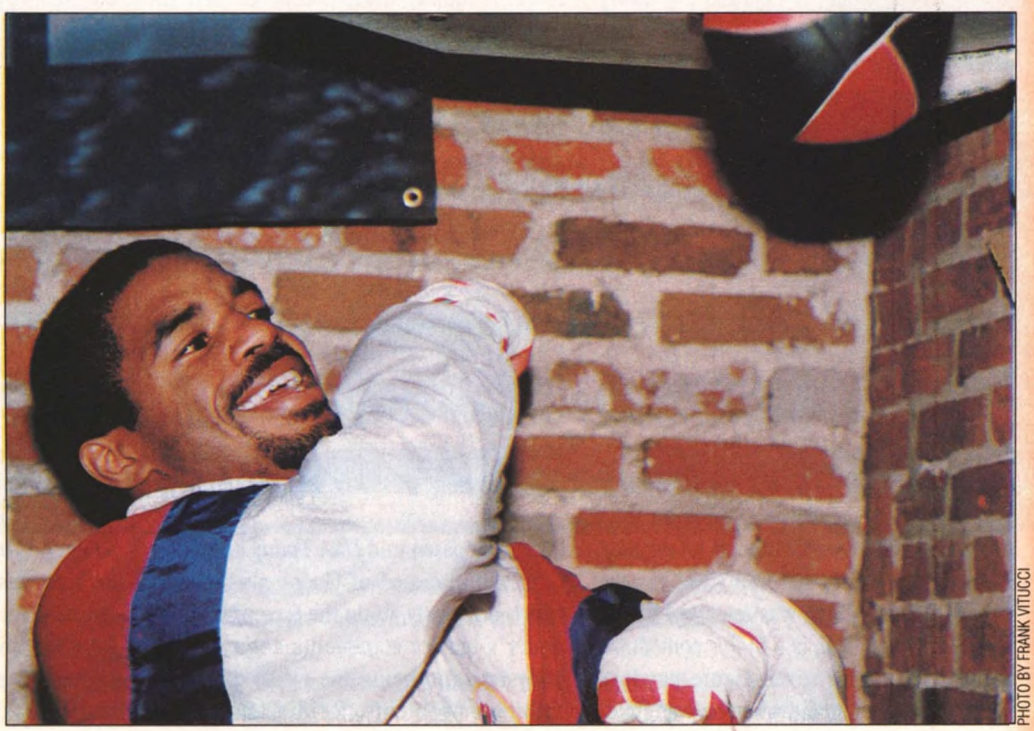

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

One of the big questions about the hard-training Reid is why he fades in the second half of most of his fights. A move up in weight hasn't helped much, so a sports psychologist might be the next thing he tries.

There did, however, appear to be a marked improvement when he fought Brantley in July. But after a good start, which included knocking Brantley down with a crushing right in the third round, Reid again slowed dramatically the second half. So if moving up in weight didn't help him all that much, what's the problem? Well, there are currently two schools of thought on the subject. One says that the beating he absorbed from Trinidad was so severe it took everything out of him. The other is that he has some sort of mental block that kicks in when a fight passes the halfway point. In the past, both Goossen and Mitchell had urged Reid to see a sports psychologist, but at first the fighter wanted no part of it.

"I thought it was a pussy thing, man," said Reid. "I was like, I don't need to see some damned doctor. I'm too tough."

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Mitchell looks on from the far right as Reid hams it up with promoters Dan Goossen (far left) and Mat Tinley. Goossen's suggestion that Reid could fight Oscar De La Hoya in the near future puzzled even Reid.

Now, he's having second thoughts.

"It must be some sort of mental block," Reid allowed the week following the Brantley fight. "I need to fight every round like it's the first round. I can't say what it is. I just can't say, but I always had this theory when I was fighting in the amateurs: If I go more than three rounds, I'm tired as hell.

"My last fight, I still wasn't where I wanted to be at, so what I want to do is stay at that level until I'm ready for the championship level again. I want to gain more experience and see which way I want to go. I've got to fight more. I've got to stay busy. I still feel like nobody can beat me, but I've got to be handled the right way, not just go in there and fight anybody. I've got to have the right guys in front of me, not fight anybody who is going to knock me out."

The difficulty with the kind of fights Reid wants is that they don't bring the kind of money Reid is accustomed to earning. He was reportedly paid $30,000 for the Brantley fight, which was televised by the Fox SportsNet. This is a major comedown from the six- and seven-figure paydays Reid used to command when he was fighting on HBO, and he is acutely aware that the end is always just one punch away.

"Because of my eye, my career is going to be shorter than I want it to be," conceded Reid, who will turn 28 on September 17. "You can go anytime, any day. I bought a couple of houses, and I'm in line to get a couple more. I want to be smart with the money I have, but I'm not financially secure. You always hear about fighters who don't have no money after they finish fighting. I would still go out and pick another career. I'm so young, this is like a chapter in my life. I wish I could do it forever, but I can't."

Goossen also knows that Reid's career won't last indefinitely, and maybe that's what motivated him to hype a potentially lucrative fight with WBC 154-pound titlist Oscar De La Hoya.

"We've talked about it. David can make the weight. It would be hard, but he could do it if all the conditions are right, money probably being the number-one thing," Goossen told *USA Today* in July.

When informed of Goossen's remarks, which obviously fly in the face of the promoter's earlier statements about Reid's body-fat ratio being the cause of all the fighter's problems, Reid seemed a bit taken aback.

"I don't think it's the right time, but who knows. I have to sit down and talk to Fred about it," said Reid. "Really, what I want to do is get a couple more fights, then have a title fight. I have to be there physically and mentally. I don't want to be treated like an opponent."

The possibility of a De La Hoya fight in the near future was also news to Jenkins.

"I wish Goossen and the others at America Presents would give me enough respect to call me," Jenkins said. "David keeps telling them to call me, but they assume they can go around me. I'm trying to rejuvenate him back to where he was, but they keep nagging him, putting him in the middle of everything. There have been heated business discussions, three, four, five days before fights. It itches his mind, and he's not focused. David is a real emotional guy, and these people disregard what makes him tick. They need to back off the kid."

And so it goes. Reid is being pulled in so may different directions, it's no wonder he's confused. The future is ambiguous territory for any fighter, but for one with Reid's copious complications, it can be downright scary. Maybe the best we can hope for is that the next time THE RING visits, that sunny smile is still gracing his face. ■

McCLINE CRASHES GRANT'S PARTY ...

BIG TIME!

Standing 6'6" and weighing 260 pounds, McCline has the bulk to make a substantial impact on the heavyweight division. If nothing else, his upset kayo of Grant on HBO proved that "Big Time" can handle the pressure of being in a big fight.

PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/HBO

By Ted Bodenrader

One punch. Frequently, that's all it takes to instantly launch one man's rise and precipitate another's demise. It's a story as old as boxing. One instant, both men are on their feet, their focus aimed at the mission in front of them. The next, one is in boxing heaven, the other in pugilistic hell.

When Michael Grant fell, and fell hard, on the evening of July 21 in Las Vegas, his glassy eyes darted upward at his latest conqueror. What he saw was an imposing opportunist who hovered menacingly above him, a 6'6", 260-pound bundle of muscle and bone known as Jameel "Big Time" McCline.

Only in a game as instantaneous as boxing does this obscure longshot from Clinton, New Jersey, enter the seven-figure

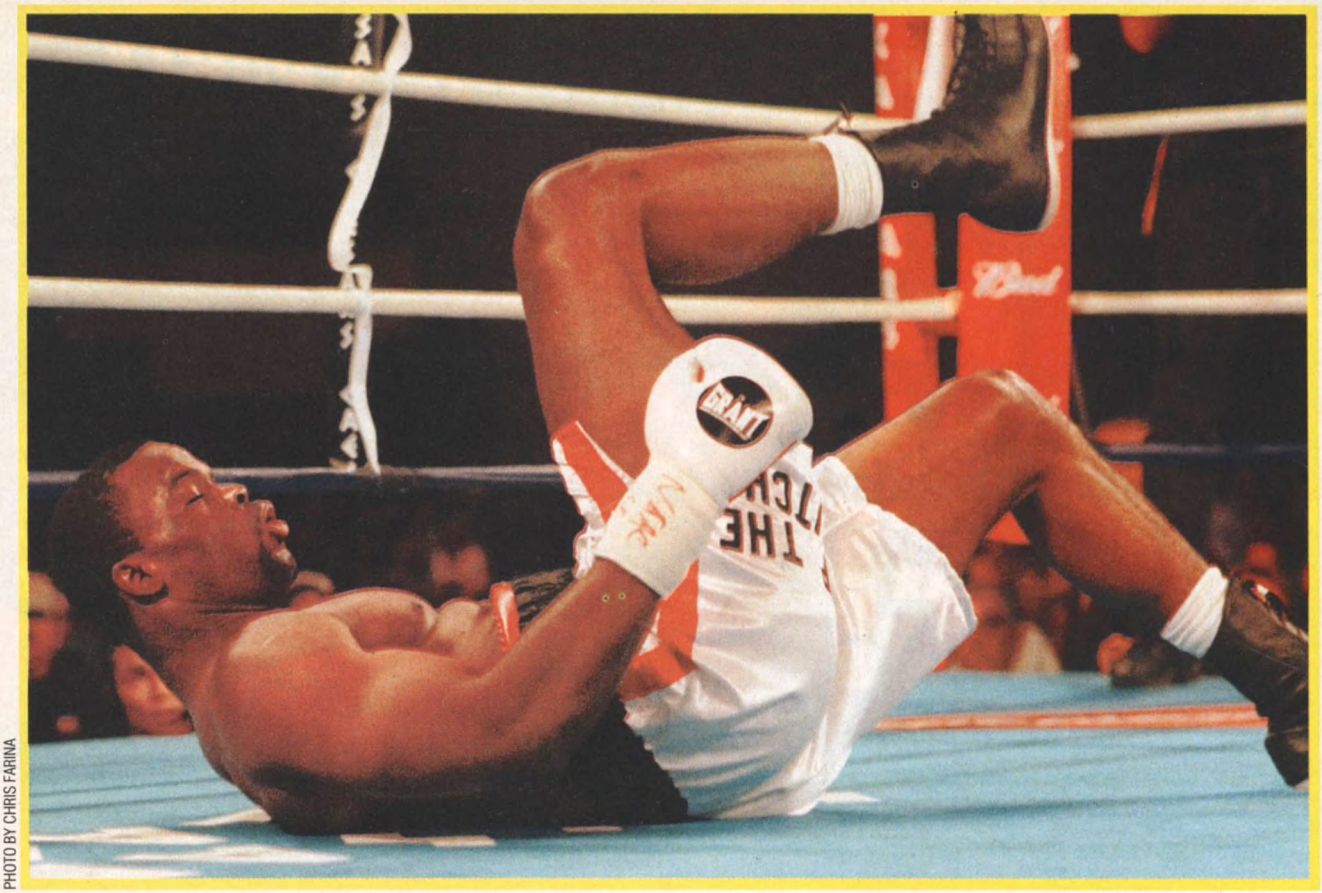

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

There he goes again! Mere seconds into his match with McCline, Grant crashed to the canvas, compliments of a left hook to the jaw that caught him cold. Moments later, Grant suffered his second consecutive knockout defeat.

sweepstakes, and only in boxing does it take a mere split second to get there.

"In my partying days, I was always known for being the guy who crashed parties," joked McCline a few days after spoiling Grant's first bout in 15 months. "This was all Grant's show, his highly publicized comeback fight, and I knew that coming in. But after I stopped him, all I could think of was that this was the greatest party I ever crashed."

It took only 43 ticks of the timekeeper's clock to expire before referee Tony Weeks opened the doors of opportunity for McCline, and in the process, slammed them shut on the comeback of the once-promising Grant. For McCline, attaining access to the big party at Caesars Palace was just a matter of snapping off one punch, as a short hook at the outset caught a cold Grant flush on the kisser and sent him tumbling backward, his right ankle buckling awkwardly beneath his 254-pound bulk as he fell.

If many were questioning whether Grant could learn to walk again as a solid heavyweight contender in the wake of last year's two-round stumble at the feet of then-champion Lennox Lewis, the answer would come in the moments that followed, as Grant staggered about the ring like a brittle infant. Not even mastermind Teddy Atlas, frantically shouting his wisdom from the ring apron just a few feet away, could return the balance to Grant's shaky feet.

As the heavy-handed McCline flailed away on the hobbled Grant, the latter turned to Weeks and muttered, "My ankle is broken." It was a grim prognosis that was later proven true by a Vegas physician (a combination of a chipped bone and torn ligaments).

As Grant, 31-2 (22), limped away helplessly on the ailing limb, it left many to wonder if he would ever again regain his footing in this tough and taxing livelihood.

"I won't lie to you," admitted Atlas, who later insisted that he'll remain in Grant's corner through the unclear future. "It's going to be very tough for Michael to return from this."

Meanwhile, seven nights prior to marrying his longtime sweetheart, Tina D'Mario, McCline's honeymoon was already underway. As soon as the fight was stopped, he gleefully collapsed into the arms of trainer Jimmy Glenn, just as manager Alan Wartsky and a swarm of supporters blanketed their man in a frenzied celebration.

"That was our plan, to go out there and lay some leather on Grant right away, to really jump on him," claimed Wartsky. "But we are still a little surprised that it happened so fast. When it was over, it was a very special moment for all of us who have been with Jameel from the start."

At the same time, across the ring, the gloom of a funeral parlor settled over Grant's corner. As a demoralized Atlas quietly snipped the gloves off Grant's wrists, Dr. Margaret Goodman attended to the broken hoof of the fallen giant.

As expected, the mood of the two camps was as diametrically opposite as fire and ice. While McCline's future was already bubbling with possibility, Grant's career appeared locked in the dark and bitter freezer. Atlas, who replaced Don Turner as the fighter's trainer, was certain-

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Grant, his ankle broken, is helped from the ring at Caesars Palace by a paramedic and trainer Teddy Atlas. Prior to the fight, it was hoped that Atlas would be able to revitalize Grant's career.

such heavy charges. When Grant survived Atlas' three-day trial period in New York with passing grades, the two engaged in seven weeks of grueling homework at Newark, New Jersey's Red Brick Gym in preparation for the McCline clash.

"Sure, when I heard we were fighting this guy, it made me nervous," admitted Atlas of the HBO match with McCline, which was underneath the Shane Mosley-Adrian Stone welterweight affair. "I would have preferred to get Michael on a *Heavyweight Explosion* card or a show of that nature, just something to get a little confidence back before we moved forward with this thing. We knew that most of his problems coming off the Lewis fight were going to be mental."

But when Atlas' student returned to the roped classroom for the July tuneup quiz, it took less than a minute for Grant to flunk out.

"That's one thing that Mike has learned the most about this game: It's full of ups and downs," said Craig Hamilton, Grant's manager. "Unfortunately, the devastating moments are the tough ones to deal with. But on the other hand, they tell you the truth about who you are."

And as Hamilton knows, the truth is hurting Grant much more than both the five-fingered reality check that McCline unloaded on him and the riveting pain that shot through his ankle soon after.

"Right now, he's staring into an abyss," said Hamilton. "He's staring into a real dark hole, and he doesn't know where all this is going to end up. Michael was not prepared or ready for what McCline did to him, and that's the reality of the situation. The truth is that he broke his ankle after

ly expecting to inject some maturity in the late-coming Grant, but instead found his new pupil muddled in fistic infancy.

"Look, a young lawyer can graduate first in his class at Harvard," reasoned Atlas. "But once he gets into that courtroom for the first time, things change a little bit. If he doesn't keep himself together mentally, he can fall apart—like that."

When the verdict came crashing down on Grant in his April 2000 bout with Lewis, the classroom is exactly where Grant turned to mend the mental strength and confidence that was shattered in his infamous title shot. And in Atlas, Grant knew that he had landed the ultimate professor.

After Grant was proven guilty of impersonating a heavyweight hotshot, Atlas was brought in to clear the suspect of

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

A happy McCline accepts congratulation via cell phone, shortly after his fight with Grant was stopped. The ex-con has turned his life around through boxing and proven his critics wrong.

taking a shot on the chin, and that's the only way we can look at it. He didn't do it climbing over the ropes, he didn't do it tripping over his feet or over the referee. He did it because he wasn't prepared for the shot that McCline laid on him."

Unlike Grant, McCline couldn't have been more mentally prepared.

"Right as the bell was about to ring," recalled McCline, "Jimmy [Glenn] kept telling me to go out and hit him on the chin with the left hook. That's exactly what we worked on in camp and that's exactly what I did. I walked out, planted my feet, and let him have it."

For McCline, that accurate left hand unlocked the doors from a deeply troubled past and made way for personal redemption. While incarcerated for gun-running in the early-'90s, McCline was visited by a hometown friend. The friend was accompanied by an up-and-coming sports agent named Michael Radcliffe, who took one glance at the towering tough guy and couldn't wait until he was sprung from the can.

"Radcliffe wanted me to meet Don Turner," recalled McCline.

McCline's encounter with Turner in the winter of '94, however, was far from an auspicious experience.

"They brought me into a filthy old garage in the back of someone's house," McCline remembered. "At the time, I didn't know the difference between a left hook and a fishing hook. But it was that day that I met a professional fighter for the first time in my life."

The youthful 6'7" behemoth named Michael Grant, whom McCline had been

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Staring into the abyss: Grant cries out in pain as he's taken to hospital following the McCline fight. He's accompanied by Dr. Flip Homanski (far left), manager Craig Hamilton (shaved head and glasses), and wife Tanya.

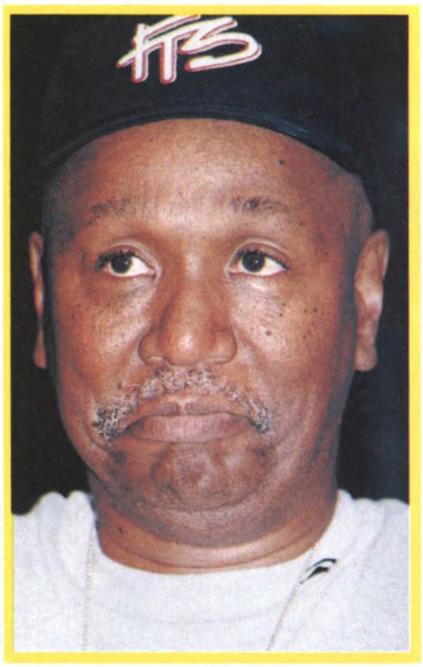

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Although he didn't work either fighter's corner, trainer Don Turner played an ancillary role in the McCline-Grant fight. He had trained Grant for all of his previous pro bouts and also said that McCline would never "amount to nothing."

studying throughout the day, climbed out of the ring and introduced himself. Turner, according to McCline, was not so kind.

"He took a look at me and went back to Radcliffe and said, 'This kid ain't gonna amount to nothing,'" said McCline. "The guy never gave me a chance to prove myself; he just wrote me off. Because of that, I don't like Don Turner one single bit, and you can print that."

McCline would turn pro anyway, in 1995, and lost two of his first five fights, including a vicious first-round kayo at the fists of Gary Bell. Like Grant, the knock on McCline was his lack of amateur experience (just one bout), and many insiders keyed in on it as his major roadblock. So, after regaining consciousness from the Bell debacle, McCline would turn his focus back to the gym, where he would amass a wealth of knowledge. His brutal sparring camps with such seasoned vets as Andrew Golota, Ray Mercer, and Hasim Rahman supplied him with a Boxing 101 crash course.

In the meantime, he quietly rung up a string of wins over mediocre opposition, and caught the eye of Lennox Lewis. Ironically, Lewis hired McCline to serve as his chief sparring partner for his first title defense after beating Evander Holyfield, figuring the towering slugger could emulate his upcoming opponent. That opponent was, of course, none other than Grant.

Upon emerging from the invaluable experience of the Lewis camp, McCline felt a lot like that astute Harvard scholar, ready to be unleashed into the courtroom for the first time. Although McCline was surprised to get the nod as Grant's first comeback opponent, he swiftly engaged in a rigorous training regimen for his coming-out bash, a routine that included swimming, biking, sprinting, and even yoga, along with all the traditional training techniques.

Although McCline, like Grant, sprung from an unusually late start, their learning curves have obviously gone in opposite directions. While Atlas' teachings were rendered useless for Grant once the initial bell rang, McCline applied his schooling from the Lewis camp—mainly to keep his cool under intense circumstances—and nailed Grant with a textbook left hook.

"Man, as a person, I like Mike Grant a lot. He's a great kid," said McCline. "But it was sweet to get a little revenge on Don Turner and anyone else who said I wouldn't go nowhere. For a long time, Grant was Turner's boy, and I know he was watching."

More importantly, the rest of the boxing world was watching, too. It was watching with curious eyes as McCline stepped boldly into the Big Time and made himself right at home. Still, at age 31, he knows there won't be many parties left to crash.

"I got to make a move now," said McCline. "The momentum from this fight won't be around forever and neither will I."

In the meantime, with a new start, a new respect, and a brand new bride, McCline, 26-2-3 (16), is once again standing tall, not only in his life, but also in a place where cynics like Turner said he'd never remain in a vertical position. And to remain upright, he only needs ask Grant about the importance of attaining a sturdy foothold on such shaky ground and remaining focused once he's introduced to his critical moment of truth.

After all, in this game, you're always just one punch away from tumbling back down to the bottom. ■

Ted Bodenrader is a freelance writer based in Boston, Massachusetts, and a regular contributor to this magazine.

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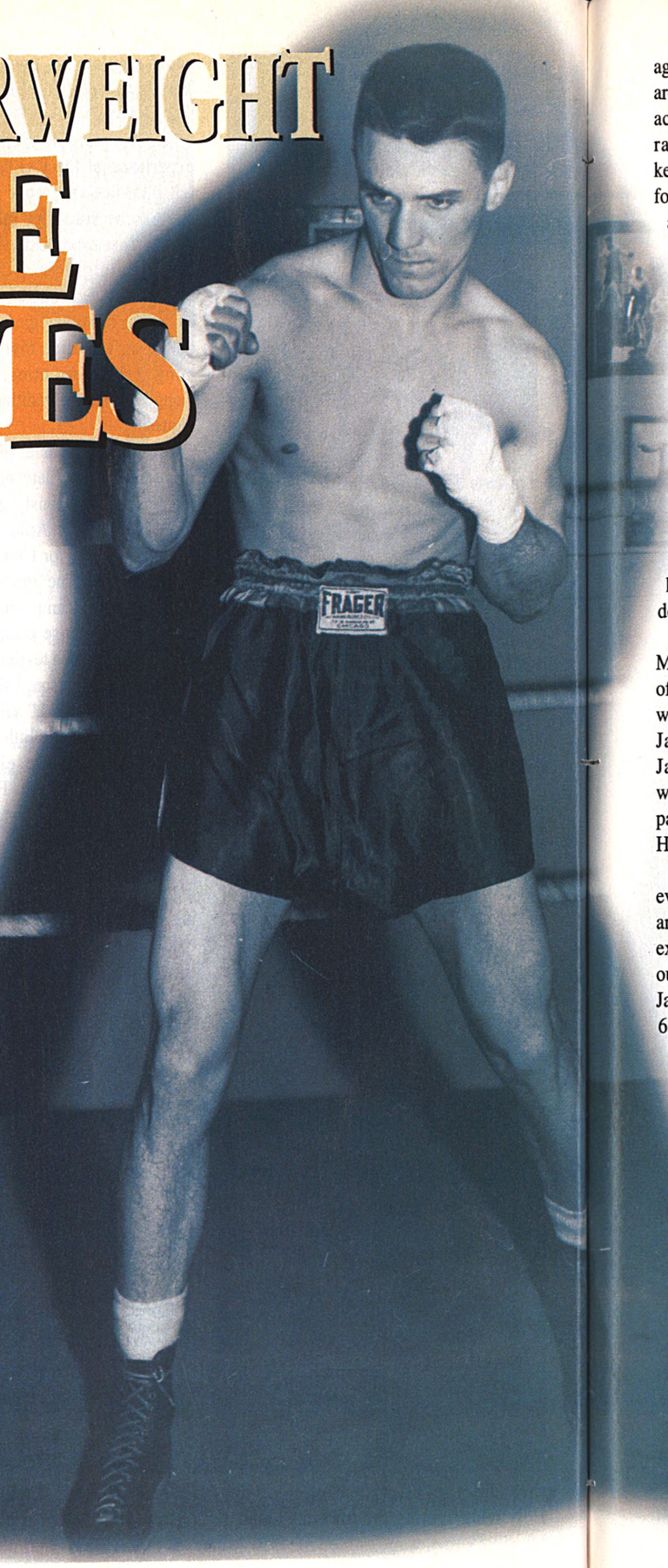
'40s FEATHERWEIGHT JACKIE GRAVES

The Answer To The Ultimate Willie Pep Trivia Question!



By Pete Ehrmann

"Is this the great Jackie Graves?" asks a voice on the phone of the most famous resident of Burr Oak Manor in Austin, Minnesota.

"No," replies the former contender for the featherweight championship of the world, "this is just Jackie Graves. Jack Dempsey was the only great Jackie."

Dempsey was great all right, but in the illustrious history of Minnesota boxing, few provided the thrills and drew the crowds and acclaim like the crew-cut southpaw who's still doing it today, at 78, only with a harmonica for his fellow nursing home residents.

Chin music was his specialty when Graves was performing before the biggest crowds in state boxing history. "In the ring," wrote George A. Barton, the state's foremost boxing writer, "Graves was a vicious fighter with the killer instinct that great pugilists must possess ... A terrific puncher, aggressive and a sterling competitor, there are no dull moments once [he] swings into action. He prefers to win by knockouts rather than decision, consequently he keeps ring addicts on edge every second, for there is no telling when he will put over a finishing blow."

Or, Barton might have added, be leveled by one himself. Had he not been handicapped by his own susceptibility to heavy leather, who knows what heights the boxer called "The Austin Atom" would have achieved in his dazzling-enough ring career in which Graves went 82-10-2 (47). Unquestionably, today he would have several title belts, and need them all to hold up his pants with their pockets overflowing with the megabucks he'd command, although in his day Graves didn't hold on to the dough he made for very long anyway.

One of 13 children born to Charlie and Mary Graves, Jackie grew up in the section of Austin called Crane's Addition. Charlie was a painter and decorator, and he taught Jackie how to fight. When he was 16, Jackie dropped out of high school and went to work for the J.C. Hormel meat packing outfit to support his own family. He was married himself by then.

A lot of top professional boxers don't ever cause the sensation Graves did as an amateur. According to Minnesota boxing expert George D. Blair, who wrote a now out-of-print booklet about Graves' career, Jackie reportedly amassed a record of 245-6 as a simon-pure. He was Northwest Golden Gloves flyweight champion in 1940, and two years later won the National Golden Gloves bantamweight title. In the '43 national finals, Graves lost a decision to future middleweight contender Tony Janiro. Several months later, they fought a five-round rematch on the fairgrounds at Austin that drew 5,000 fans. Graves won the decision, and when his first son was born that same night, Jackie named him Tony Lee after Janiro, whom he still considers one of the best he ever fought.

As an amateur, Graves also beat future world champs Harold Dade (bantamweight) and Johnny Bratton (welterweight). His "loss to [future lightweight contender] Freddie Dawson in the St. Paul Auditorium," wrote Blair, "attracted over 2,000 fans in early 1943, and it was obvious that Graves would be a terrific pro attraction."

Over 5,000 spectators crowded into the Minneapolis Auditorium on February 1, 1944, to see Graves in his first paid outing. It was the main event, scheduled for six rounds. Joe Law was the opponent, and after Graves laid the Law down in round three, referee Joe Louis, then the heavyweight champion of the world, stopped it. Five wins later, Graves beat George DeGideo on May 19, in three rounds, to win the state featherweight title before a crowd of 4,000-plus. By the time he starched Eddie Lee in six for his 11th straight win, THE RING's Minnesota correspondent, Billy Colbert, said Graves was "ready for the best featherweights in the country, and will give any of them a fight. Here is a featherweight who gives the fans action every minute he is in the ring."

In the amateurs, Graves had twice stopped Bernard Docusen in three rounds. In 1944, Docusen, only 17, was a wunderkund, too, and getting paid $2,000 for fighting six-rounders in his hometown of New Orleans. In a few years, he would challenge, unsuccessfully, for Sugar Ray Robinson's welterweight title. Docusen got a decision over Graves on December 11, 1944, but according to Blair, "Docusen had an 11-pound weight advantage over Graves, and when it was over, the New Orleans press said it was one of the worst decisions ever seen in New Orleans boxing."

Graves finished his rookie year 18-1 (13), and nothing better illustrates the difference between boxing then and today than what happened in January of '45. Nowadays, a former national amateur champion with Graves' record and punch, consistently drawing 4,000-7,000 fans to his fights, would already have his picture plastered on the covers of the fight magazines and possibly have several alphabet titles to his name (perhaps in two or three different weight classes). It didn't work that way then, but it was still considered a boost akin to the "*Good Housekeeping* Seal Of Approval" when THE RING got around to naming Graves its "Featherweight Prospect Of The Month."

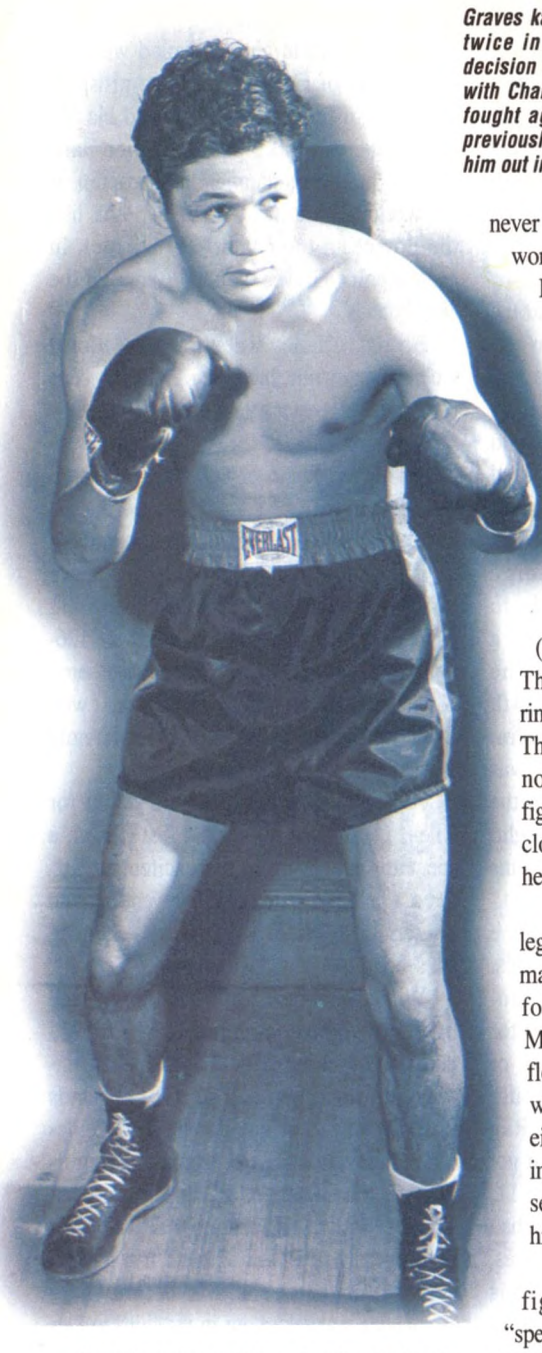
Harry Jeffra might've argued with the designation of Graves as a mere prospect after the Austin fighter inaugurated his '45 campaign by making the former bantamweight and featherweight champion of the world, who'd had 104 fights, look like the novice in their February 6 match in Minneapolis. Graves won every one of the eight rounds.

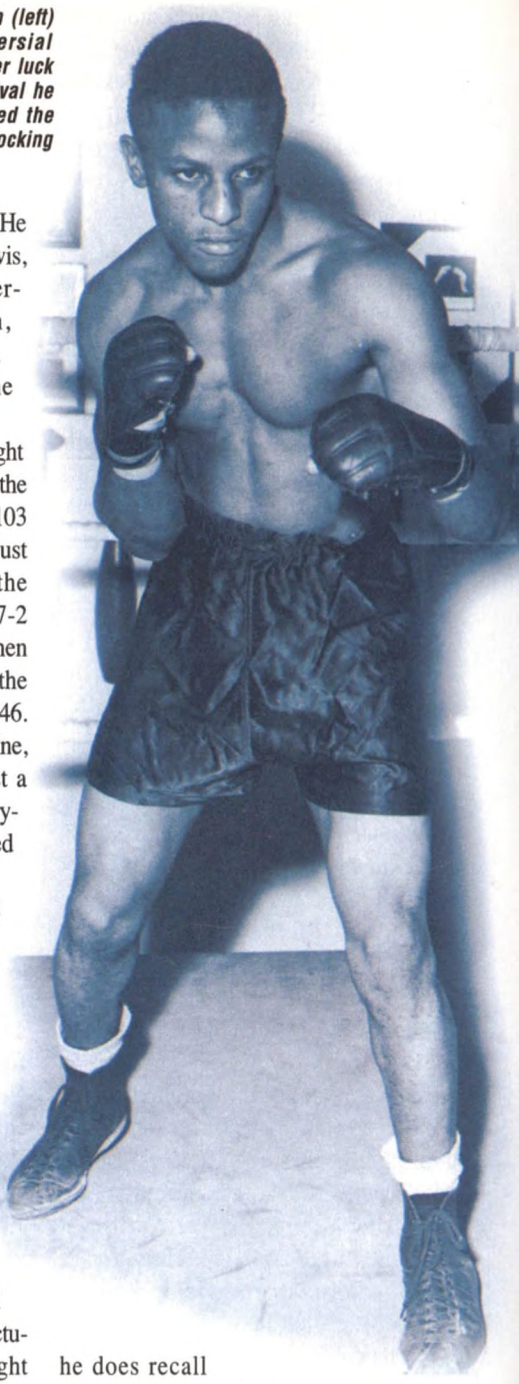
Beating Charley Riley for the National Golden Gloves title three years earlier was one of Graves' biggest amateur thrills. When they met again on March 27, 1945, the stakes were plenty higher. Riley, of St. Louis, Missouri, was 34-0 in the pros, and he started out the bout at the sold-out Minneapolis Auditorium determined to make it 35 in three minutes or less. He clouted Graves with several big punches in the first round that shook the 126-pound Paul Bunyan. But Graves weathered them, and at the end of the round scored with a left hook under Riley's heart that foretold the way things would go in the second.

At least there was a second round for Riley. During the 60-second rest period, a spectator caught up in the excitement suffered a fatal heart attack. Riley went out, but not terminally, from a right to the chops in the second.

Wins over Luis Castillo and top-ranked bantamweight contender Tony Olivera boosted Graves into THE RING's top 10 featherweight rankings, and on July 4, hands made sore by knocking down Jorge Robles eight times at the Rochester Fairgrounds caused Graves to settle for a unanimous decision in his first 10-rounder. After a 2½-month rest, Graves knocked out five guys in less than eight weeks. But before Chito Hernandez was taken out in the third in Des Moines, he shook the now-fourth-ranked Minnesotan with a right to the jaw. And when Graves fought nondescript Jimmy Joyce in Omaha on November 12, his Achilles heel was fully exposed by the first hard punch Joyce landed, which put Jackie to sleep 27 seconds into round two.

Another difference between then and now—this one to the credit of the modern game—was the absence in those days of a mandatory 30- to 60-day suspension for kayo victims. Just four days after the Joyce debacle, in a fight described by THE RING's Colbert as "one of the roughest seen around these parts," Graves won an eight-round verdict over Sam Parrotta in Minneapolis.





Graves kayoed New Orleans' Bernard Docusen (left) twice in the amateurs, but lost a controversial decision to him in the pros. Graves had better luck with Charley Riley (right), another amateur rival he fought again in the pro ranks. Graves handed the previously undefeated Riley his first loss, knocking him out in the second round.

Local promoter Tony Stecher had only standing room tickets left for sale on December 13 for the rematch with Joyce at the Auditorium. This time Graves kept his chin under wraps and came away with a unanimous decision in eight rounds that made him the third-ranked featherweight contender as 1946 rolled around.

By then there was no question he was, in the words of George Barton, "far and away the most popular boxer Minnesota has produced since the palmy days of Mike and Tommy Gibbons, Mike O'Dowd, and Billy Miske, idols of yesteryear." From January through June of that year, Graves fought five times at the Minneapolis Auditorium, and never drew fewer than 5,000 customers. He won decisions over Charles Cabey Lewis, Pedro Hernandez, former featherweight titlist Jackie Wilson, Aponte Torres, and Petey Virgin.

Then the champion of the world came to town.

It was only a non-title fight between the man who'd held the belt since 1942, and who in 103 professional bouts had lost just once (with one draw), and the number-two contender, then 37-2 (20). But 9,033 fans went crazy when The Austin Atom made his way to the ring at the Auditorium on July 25, 1946. There was no rap music, no fog machine, no choreographed highhorsery—just a fighter with the hood of his white terry-cloth robe flipped over his flat-topped head, going to meet a legend.

When it was over, Willie Pep's legend glowed even brighter. "Just a marvel of boxing perfection," said former middleweight contender Mike Gibbons after the champion floored Graves 10 times on his way to stopping him in the eighth round. "He does things in the ring I never expected to see again. I'd even pay to see him shadowbox."

Contemporary accounts of the fight use words like "torrid" and "spectacular," and report that Graves actually knocked Pep down twice with right hooks. But what's famous about it to this day is local newspaper columnist Don Riley's contention that Pep advised him before the fight even started that he intended to win the third round without even throwing a single punch—and then did so by feinting and moving Graves around the ring for three minutes.

Not necessarily, says historian Blair. Although he considers Riley one of the best boxing writers and has even compiled a collection of his ring columns, Blair dismisses that account of Pep's third round wizardry as "an old tale." After all these years, the recollection of Graves himself is hazy, although he does recall putting Pep down in the fight. On one point, however, he is absolutely certain: "I'll say he was the greatest featherweight champion who ever lived."

Graves remained a middle-rank featherweight contender for the balance of his career, which still had plenty to go after the Pep fight. Over the next nine years, he won much more than he lost, including victories over other ex-world champions Harold Dade, Jackie Callura, and Manuel Ortiz, and fellow contender Teddy "Red Top" Davis. He remained as exciting as ever, but there were problems besides his chin affecting Graves' career.

In 1947, Pep suffered a broken back in an airplane crash, and the speculation (inaccurate, it turned out) was that the career of the featherweight ruler was over. When Graves was matched against Cuban champion Miguel Acevedo on April 18, THE RING Editor Nat Fleischer flew to Minneapolis for the fight, "figuring that in the event Pep had to retire, the Graves-Acevedo contest could be regarded as one of several elimination bouts to decide Pep's successor." He and the other 8,562 spectators were stunned when Acevedo flattened Graves in the second frame. Later, Graves would blame the defeat on "marital problems."

In early-'49, as Graves was preparing for Eddie Marotta (whom he would kayo in four), it made the news when he was knocked out by a sparring partner named Luis Ramos, who, the wire service story reported, was duly apologetic about it.

Coming up fast behind Graves in his home state were the Flanagan brothers, Glen and Del. Graves beat Glen late that year, but was knocked out in a rematch. The Minneapolis fights drew a combined attendance of over 12,000. A year later, Del put him out in three.

In between, Graves won a lot of fights and spent a lot of money. He recalls many times standing outside the arenas after his bouts and passing out money, sometimes $100 bills, to friends and hangers-on. By the time he retired in 1955, the restaurant and resort in which he'd invested his ring earnings were gone.

It was against Graves that Willie Pep allegedly won a round without throwing a punch. That was in 1946, when the featherweight champion stopped "The Austin Atom" in the eighth round of a non-title fight.

And by then, the thing The Austin Atom was hitting hardest was the bottle, a situation exacerbated by the death of his son, Tony.

According to Blair's booklet, Graves was so bad that several times it was reported that he had died. "Searching for his life, [he] became a drifter of sorts," Blair wrote, "and worked at several different jobs to make a living. He was a prison guard for a while, and, according to Graves, he was once a chauffeur for film star Steve McQueen," and a handyman for Patty Hearst.

Asked about that now, Graves says only that he "kind of lost track" of his life after boxing, but admits that "after I quit, I started drinking and tried to be a big shot. That didn't work. I haven't drunk for a long, long time."

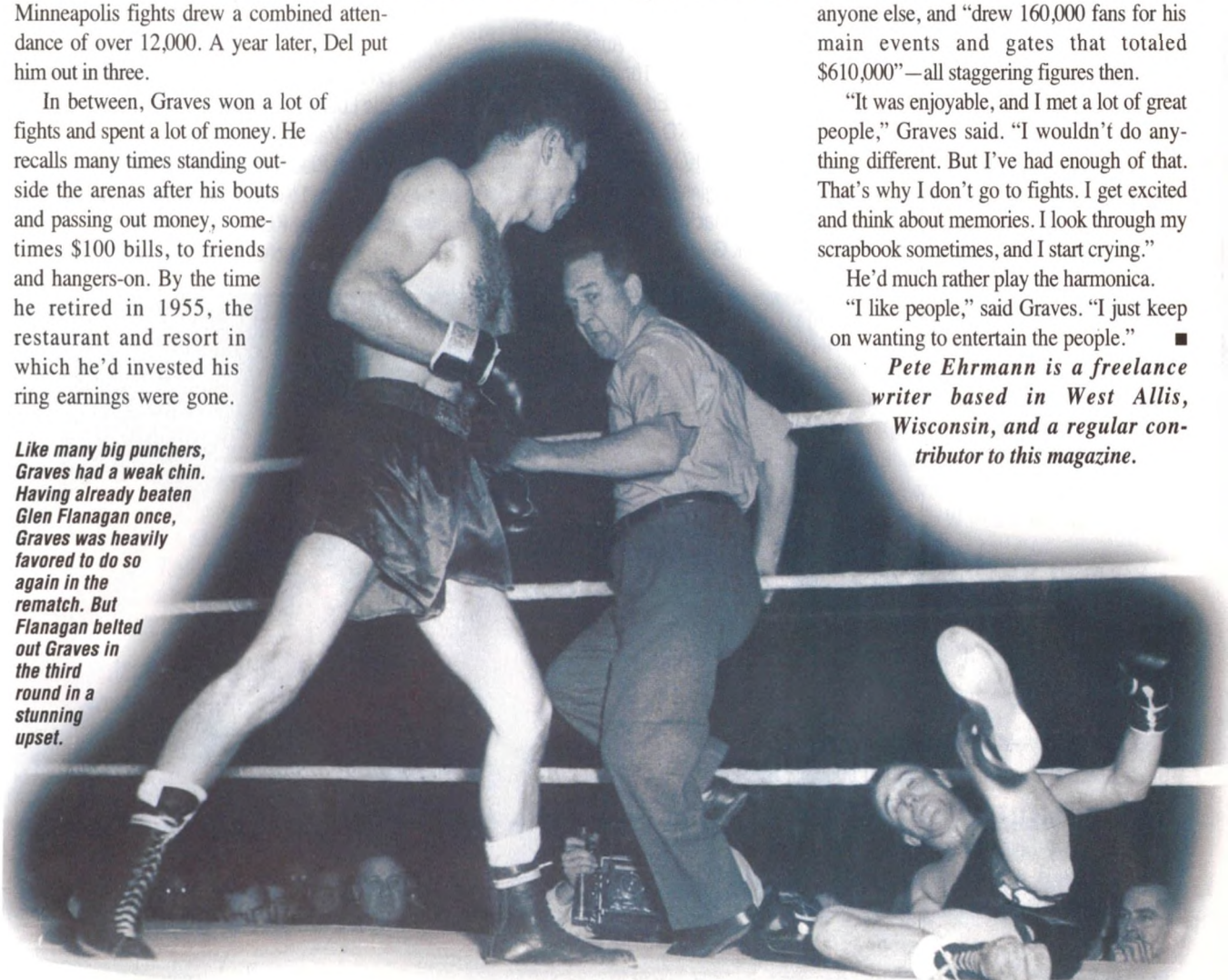
Boxing is also a thing of the past for the man who headlined more Twin Cities fight cards (over 60, according to Blair) than anyone else, and "drew 160,000 fans for his main events and gates that totaled $610,000"—all staggering figures then.

"It was enjoyable, and I met a lot of great people," Graves said. "I wouldn't do anything different. But I've had enough of that. That's why I don't go to fights. I get excited and think about memories. I look through my scrapbook sometimes, and I start crying."

He'd much rather play the harmonica.

"I like people," said Graves. "I just keep on wanting to entertain the people." ■

Pete Ehrmann is a freelance writer based in West Allis, Wisconsin, and a regular contributor to this magazine.



Like many big punchers, Graves had a weak chin. Having already beaten Glen Flanagan once, Graves was heavily favored to do so again in the rematch. But Flanagan belted out Graves in the third round in a stunning upset.

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Vassiliy Jirov W 10 Adolpho Washington
(Non-Title Bout)
Juan Carlos Gomez KO 5 Al Cole
(Non-Title Bout)
Wladimir Klitschko KO 6 Charles Shufford
Jameel McCline KO 1 Michael Grant
Frans Botha KO 2 Russell Chasteen
Michael Moorer Tech. Draw 5 Dale Crowe
James Toney KO 3 Wesley Martin
Danny Williams KO 4 Julius Francis
Tim Witherspoon KO 1 Cleveland Woods
David Bostice W 8 Lorenzo Boyd
Herbie Hide KO 3 Alexei Osokin
Robert Davis KO 1 Sedreck Fields
Joe Mesi KO 7 Bert Cooper
William Guthrie KO 2 Lorenzo Boyd
Alex Vasiliev KO 7 Mark Potter
Bob Mirovic KO 6 Nathan Briggs
Luan Krasniqi KO 2 Rene Hanl
Attila Levin KO 9 Ray Austin
China Smith KO 3 Tony LaRosa
Tye Fields KO 1 Ed White
Peter Okhello KO 2 Mosese Kavika
Kelvin Davis KO 1 Derek Amos
Robert Wiggins W 6 Louis Monaco
Ricky Womack W 4 Kenny Snow
Dominick Guinn KO 2 Maurice Wheeler

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Johnny Nelson W 12 Marcelo Dominguez
Clinton Woods W 6 Paul Bonson
Glen Kelly W 8 Jamie Wallace
Dale Brown KO 1 Christopher Brown
Bruce Scott W 12 Rene Janvier
Michael Rush W 10 Kenny Snow
Pietro Aurino W 6 Armando Grueso

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Roy Jones W 12 Julio Gonzalez
(Retains Unified Title)
Lou Del Valle D 12 Bruno Girard
(For Vacant WBA Title)
Antonio Tarver KO 10 Chris Johnson
Glencoffe Johnson KO 6 Thomas Ulrich
Richard Hall KO 1 Anthony Spain
Mario Veit W 8 Ahmet Oener
Quincy Taylor KO 4 Fred Moore
Jim Crawford W 6 Kwan Manasseh
Randy Griffin KO 2 Israel Ponce

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Eric Lucas KO 7 Glenn Catley
(Wins Vacant WBC Title)
Manuel Siaca KO 1 Luis Apiniani
Robin Reid KO 4 Soon Botes
David Starie KO 3 Bruno Godoy
Hector Camacho Sr. W 12 Roberto Duran

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE

Alex Hilton reels from a Joe Gatti right

Vinny Paz KO 2 Pat Lawlor
Anthony Hanshaw W 10 Kingsley Ikeke
Joe Gatti KO 5 Alex Hilton
Jurgen Brahmer KO 1 Tony Menefee
Damon McCreary KO 3 Etianne Whitaker
Freemon Barr KO 4 Roni Martinez
Vitaly Kopytko W 6 Troy Barnes
Anthony Mundine KO 3 Kevin Pompey

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Harry Simon W 12 Hassine Cherifi
Armand Krajnc KO 3 Artur Drinaj
Tito Mendoza KO 5 Ricky Ramirez
Tony Ayala W 10 Santos Cardona
Bert Schenk KO 1 Anton Lascek
Wayne Alexander W 8 Viktor Fesetchko
Ryan Rhodes W 6 Youri Tsarenko
Cristian Sanavia KO 12 Ramon Moyano
Naotaka Hozumi KO 9 Kevin Palmer
Gary Lockett KO 1 Howard Clarke
Tokunbo Olajide KO 3 Leroy Brooks
Kelly Pavlik KO 2 Mario Lopez

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Roman Karmazin W 6 Viktor Fesetchko
Mamadou Thiam KO 1
Fernando Hernandez
Rodney Jones KO 6 Augustin Caballero
Kevin Kelly W 8 Josh Clemshaw
Nick Acevedo No-Contest 1 Leon Pearson
Luis Collazo W 8 Luis Alberto Santiago

WELTERWEIGHTS

Shane Mosley KO 3 Adrian Stone
(Retains WBC Title)
Andrew Lewis No-Contest 2
Ricardo Mayorga
(Retains WBA Title)
Daniel Santos No-Contest 1
Antonio Margarito
Shannan Taylor KO 1 Norberto Bado
Oba Carr W 10 Norberto Sandoval
John Molnar Tech. Win 8 Victor Rosado
Rev Santillan W 12 Hiroshi Watanabe
Pedro Saiz W 8 Del Matchett
Miguel Figueroa KO 1 Kevin Payne
Dagoberto Najera KO 2 Miguel Ruiz
Julian Burford KO 2 Kenito Drake
Larry Mosley KO 5 Luis Montez

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Micky Ward W 10 Emanuel Burton
Terronn Millett KO 5 Fray Sierra
Pablo Sarmiento KO 11 Billy Schwer
Fred Pendleton KO 1 Horatio Garcia
Hector Quiroz KO 7 Francisco Mendez
Junior Witter KO 5 Alan Temple
Ebo Elder W 12 Jaime Morales
Wayne Rigby KO 3 Keith Jones

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

In Jin Chi takes the offensive against Erik Morales

Fabrice Colombel KO 8 Salvatore Battaglia
Hicklet Lau W 10 Danny Rios
Juan Valenzuela W 8 Damian Fuller
Anthony Washington W 6 Mark Adams
Craig Weber KO 2 Ryan Maraldo
Demetrius Hopkins KO 3 Abdul Blackburn
Juan Diaz KO 1 Scott Buck

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Angel Manfredy W 10 Lamar Murphy
Leonard Dorin KO 9 Martin O'Malley
Carlos Urias W 8 Lemuel Nelson
Gary St. Clair W 6 Mendocino Sebua
Miguel Cotto KO 2 Arturo Rodriguez
Christian Bejarano KO 4 Lee Willis

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

William Abelyan W 10 Guty Espadas
Phillip Ndou KO 5 Carlos Rios
David Santos KO 4 Jovy Chan
Claudio Martinet KO 11 Javier Alvarez
Tiger Ari KO 2 Kazunori Fujita
Juan Antonio Lopez W 12 Carlos Ramirez
Mike Anchondo KO 1 Juan Carlos Martinez
Naoto Takajo W 10 Ahmad Fandi
Alex Arthur W 4 Rakhim Mingaleev

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Erik Morales W 12 In Jin Chi
(Retains WBC Title)
John Michael Johnson KO 3 Antonio Diaz
Kozo Ishii KO 6 Frangky Mamuaya
Roger Medal W 12 Max Gomez
Victor Santiago KO 1 Wilfredo Vargas
Emmanuel Lucero KO 3 Shawn Wilkins
Rocky Juarez KO 3 Fabian Espinoza

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Paulie Ayala W 12 Bones Adams
Mark Johnson KO 6 Arturo Valenzuela
Patrick Mullings W 12 Michael Alldis
Manabu Fukushima KO 2 Annis Dwi

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Hussein Hussein KO 2 Silvio Glenogo
Juan Sanjuanelo KO 9 Nicky Booth
Oscar Andrade KO 6 Osvaldo Guerrero
Ablorh Sowah D 12 Alberto Ontiveros
Silence Mabuza KO 9 Johannes Maisa
Abner Cordero KO 4 Ricky Gayamo

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Mauricio Pastrana KO 10
Gerson Guerrero
Martin Castillo Tech. Win 6 Ricardo Vargas
Damaen Kelly KO 4 Sipho Mantyi
Magoma Shabani KO 6 Ferid Ben Jeddou
Jose Angel Beranza KO 7 Valerio Sanchez
Gabriel Elizondo W 4 Leonardo Gutierrez

FLYWEIGHTS

Pongsaklek Singwangcha KO 5
Hayato Asai
(Retains WBC Title)
Malcolm Tunacao Tech. Draw 4
Randy Mangubat
Anthony Villamor W 12 Melvin Magramo
Liborio Romero KO 2 Ramon Hurtado

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Wolf Tokimitsu KO 3 Fanimit Simeknoi
Melchor Cob-Castro KO 11 Javier Torres
Juanito Rubillar KO 3 Takahiko Mizuno

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PRESENTS

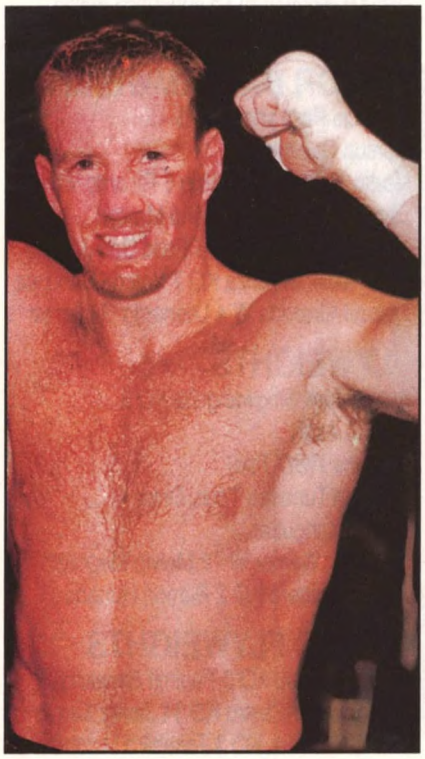
The RING

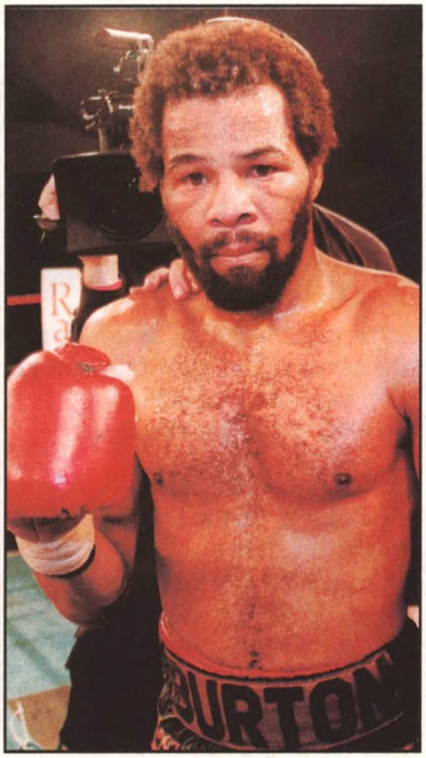
FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

The last time we had co-winners of the Fighter of the Month honor was in the March '95 issue, when George Foreman and Roy Jones shared the distinction. Foreman had just shocked the world by winning the heavyweight title from Michael Moorer, and Jones had just turned in one of the most awesome boxing displays the sport had ever seen in his dominant win over James Toney.

More than six years later, as we again name two winners, we do so under very different circumstances. Neither Micky Ward nor Emanuel Burton accomplished anything even close to what Foreman and Jones did. No titles were won, no pound-for-pound lists were climbed. What we are rewarding instead is good, old-fashioned effort by two middle-of-the-road contenders who gave more than anyone could've asked them to give over the course of 10 brutal, draining, unforgettable rounds.

In the end, though Ward won a unanimous decision, both men came away victorious in a fight that, had it been held on a neutral site, could have gone either way. Both Ward and Burton deserve tremendous credit for making this fight the classic that it was, and both of these underpaid warriors deserve to have their names elevated above all the others who donned the gloves this month.





Micky Ward & Emanuel Burton

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Shane Mosley KO 3 Adrian Stone

Las Vegas, Nevada: If Oscar De La Hoya ever seriously considered fighting Mosley again, he probably changed his mind after watching the WBC welterweight champion damn near decapitate mismatched challenger Stone at Caesars Palace. Not that Stone is anywhere near the fighter De La Hoya is, but the final punch that ended the challenger's futile bid was enough to scare off any fighter in the world between 147 and 160 pounds.

Stone, 147, Bristol, England, was Sugar Shane's third stay-busy opponent since he won the title by beating De La Hoya in June 2000. And although the fringe contender came in with a respectable 30-3-2 (23) record, he simply wasn't in Mosley's league. But who is?

Not too much happened the first two rounds. Rather than setting up his powerpunches with jabs, Mosley, 29, seemed to be looking to end matters with one big shot. He landed a couple of solid blows in each round, but Stone, who showed a fairly tight guard, quickly wrapped him up and prevented an early crisis. But when Mosley, 147, Pomona, California, opened up in the third, the so-called contest quickly turned into an execution.

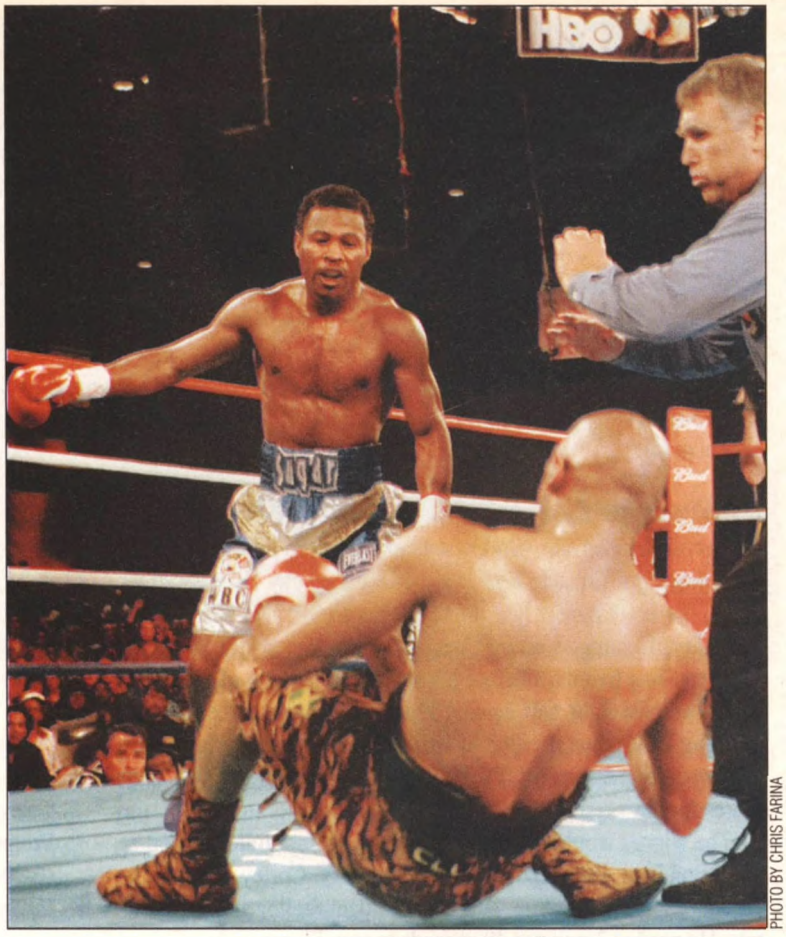


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Stone crumbles from Mosley's right hand

Several thumping rights to the top of Stone's head short-circuited his equilibrium and set him up for the textbook combination that ended the fight. As Stone, 30, stumbled around on rubbery legs, Mosley positioned himself perfectly and delivered a short left uppercut that raised the stricken fighter's head—directly into the path of a screaming right hand. The punch landed with the impact of an artillery shell, and Stone crashed down on his back with a loud thud. Referee Jay Nady (USA) immediately stopped the fight, without bothering to count, and awarded Mosley a knockout victory at the 2:01 mark.

"I don't know if Oscar wants to fight me, but he needs to fight me," a smiling and hopeful-sounding Mosley said after running his record to 38-0 (35). "He needs to get his revenge."

Nice try, Shane. But you may as well forget about it. "The Golden Boy" has less feisty fish to fry. Most likely, next up for Mosley will be a unification with either WBA titlist Andrew "Six Heads" Lewis or IBF counterpart Vernon Forrest, who holds an amateur victory over Sugar Shane.

Television: HBO

Promoter: Cedric Kushner Promotions

(7-21-01)

Johnny Tapia KO 3 Cesar Soto

Las Vegas, Nevada: Tapia has never been billed as a puncher, but two left hands to the pit of the stomach were enough to convince Soto not to believe the billing. Soto, a former WBC featherweight champion, was knocked down and out by a pair of Tapia hooks to the body in the third round of their scheduled 10-round bout at the Mandalay Bay Events Center. A round after Tapia was controversially knocked down and absorbed several big shots from Soto, the excitable Albuquerque, New Mexico, native overpowered Soto, stopping him at the 2:47 mark.

"To beat one of the toughest guys at 126, that is a big step for me," Tapia said.

He had to work to get the victory, though. After an uneventful first round, Soto, 126, picked up the pace in the second. Tapia, 34, stood in front of the on-charging Mexican and, as a result, Soto, 28, was able to find the range with several powershots.

Tapia hit the canvas midway through the second, and referee Joe Cortez (USA) ruled a knockdown. Soto landed a left hook just before Tapia fell, forcing Cortez to make the knockdown call, but Tapia's feet were entangled with Soto's, and that, as much as the force of the blow, contributed to Tapia going down. Tapia looked angrily at Cortez as he was receiving the eight-count and asked, "Are you bought, too?" That was in reference to Tapia's contention that his two fights with Paulie Ayala in Las Vegas were rigged because Ayala's promoter, Bob Arum, is based in Vegas.

But Tapia realized he needed to go in a different direction, and he was a new fighter once the third round began. Though his new trainer, Buddy McGirt, urged his man to box, Tapia, 125½, decided to try to slug with Soto. Tapia was getting the better of it throughout the third, but really took it to another level late in the

round. He dug two thudding left hooks to the area just below Soto's rib cage, plus several powershots to the head. Soto, in slow motion it seemed, collapsed to the canvas, wincing in pain from the bodyshots.

"He is a very strong fighter," Soto, 53-6-3 (39), said. "They were good punches he hit me with. I couldn't get my breath."

It was the first time that Soto had been stopped, a point not lost on Tapia.

"He was no slouch," Tapia, 50-2-2 (27), said. "He's never been knocked out."

Television: Showtime

Promoter: Don King Productions

(6-30-01)

Kevin Iole

DeMarcus Corley KO 1 Felix Flores

Las Vegas, Nevada: Corley was expecting to be showered up and enjoying a ringside seat at the Mandalay Bay Events Center during the co-feature to the Johnny Tapia-Cesar Soto main event, but that all changed when Ener Julio was discovered to have cataracts. Just five days before his scheduled defense of the WBO junior welterweight belt against Flores, Julio was forced to pull out. The WBO then decided to strip Julio and have Corley—who was preparing for an off-TV bout on the show—step in to fight Flores for the vacant title.

The winner would then have to defend against Julio as soon as the Colombian was prepared after his surgery. Corley, 27, had little doubt it would be him, and his confident feeling proved accurate. He needed 2 minutes 49 seconds to stop Flores.

It was a thing of beauty, as he put Flores, 25, down with one of the best uppercuts seen in years about 90 seconds into the fight. From that point on, it was all but academic.

"I knew this. It was no surprise," Corley said. "I knew when I got the opportunity, I would take advantage of it. I didn't expect the first round, maybe, but I had no doubt I would win."

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Flores walks into Corley's right uppercut

Flores, 140, Puerto Rico, who had given former WBA super lightweight champion Sharmba Mitchell a stiff test, exuded confidence, but he walked directly into a right uppercut from Corley, 140, Washington, D.C., and went down immediately. He hit the canvas again less than a minute later from a crushing left uppercut, and referee Jay Nady (USA) thought seriously about stopping the fight before deciding to give Flores one last chance.

But Nady had no choice just a few seconds later. Corley unleashed a brutal right-left combination, and Nady halted the carnage as Flores wobbled back.

"Zab Judah. Kostya Tszyu. Bring them on," Corley said. "I'll fight them all."

A downcast Flores had little to offer in the way of an excuse. He was philosophical, but hardly in a mood to carry on a discourse.

"He surprised me with the uppercut, and that's it," said Flores, 17-3 (13). "There's nothing else to say."

There was for Corley, however, who said he felt he was the uncrowned champion anyway since he had beaten Julio in 1999. Now 26-1-1 (16), Corley said he is ready to make a name for himself.

"This was just the first step," he said. "I told you I would do this, and I did. Now, I have a lot of other business to take care of."

Television: Showtime

Promoter: Don King Productions

(6-30-01)

Kevin Iole

Julien Lorcy W 12 Takanori Hatakeyama

Saitama, Japan: French slickster Lorcy, 134¼, captured the WBA lightweight belt for the second time, as he withstood the constant pressure of defending champ Hatakeyama, 135, and scored with the more accurate blows to win a unanimous decision over 12 heats before some 20,000 spectators at Saitama Super Arena. Lou Tabat (USA) scored the bout 118-110, Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa) had it 117-111, and Erkki Meronen (Finland) saw it 117-112, all for Lorcy, 49-2-2 (35). Hatakeyama, making his third defense, dropped to 24-2-3 (19). The referee was Julio Cesar Alvarado (Panama).

It was a much closer fight than the tallies might indicate, as the 25-year-old Japanese champion kept going forward all night, while the challenger blocked his attacks well and countered with precision. Lorcy, 29, boxed cleverly from the start, displaying sound defensive tactics against Hatakeyama's sporadic but furious combinations. The champ was eager to score with big punches and knock his opponent out, but his punches were wild. Lorcy was often forced to the ropes in the later rounds, but he covered himself up well and fought back with flashy spurts of punches in combination.

Though Hatakeyama had refused to shake hands prior to their encounter, he congratulated Lorcy on his victory by offering his hand after the fight. It was a beautiful scene.

Promoter: Yokohama Hikari Promotions

(7-1-01)

Joe Koizumi

Hector Camacho Jr. No-Contest 5 Jesse James Leija

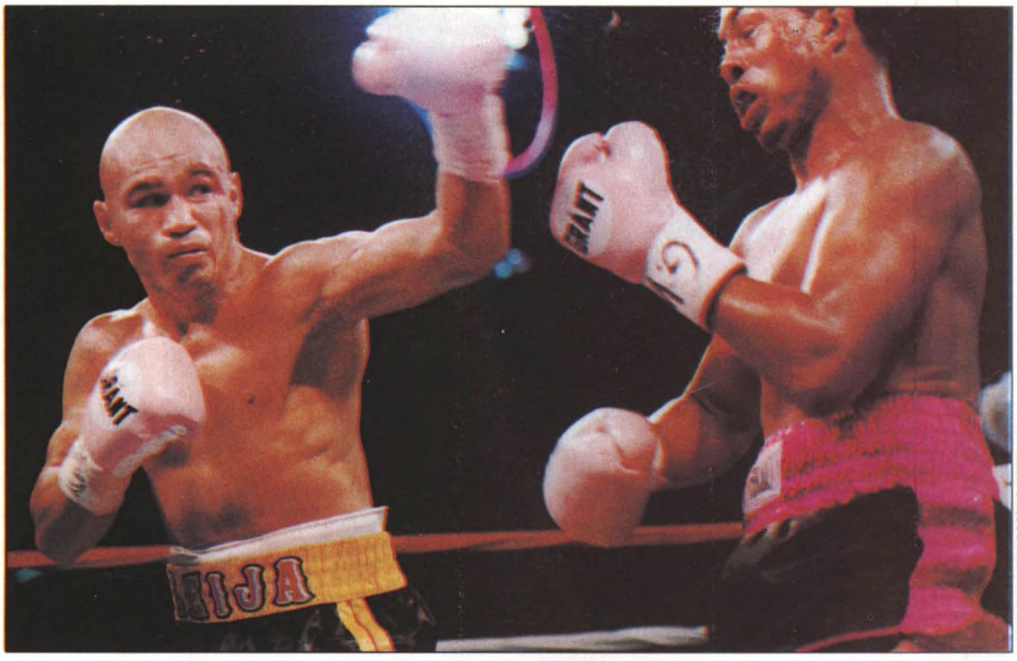


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Leija rocks Camacho en route to controversial no-contest

Brooklyn, New York: It was one of the most scandalous scenes to unfold on a baseball field since Arnold Rothstein fixed the World Series in 1919. In a ring set up on the infield of Coney Island's Keyspan Park, Camacho controversially headed for the dugout rather than stepping to the plate when the game was on the line, preserving his unbeaten record, but demonstrating that he lacks the heart necessary to become a great fighter.

After a clash of heads with supposed "opponent" Leija in the fifth round, the 22-year-old Camacho emerged with a cut on his right eyelid—and an obvious desire to get out of the fight. When the round ended, ringside physician Robert Polofsky examined the cut and said Camacho could continue, but after a brief delay, Camacho called Polofsky back, complained of blurred vision, and convinced Polofsky to advise referee Steve Smoger (USA) to stop the fight. Because Camacho's supposed injury had been caused by an accidental foul, the fight initially went to the scorecards. Judge Larry Hazzard Jr. (USA) had Camacho up 48-47, and judges Chick Hill (USA) and Bobby Gilson (USA) both saw it 49-46 for the prefight favorite, even though THE RING and much of the ringside media scored the abbreviated bout 48-47 in favor of Leija.

As it turned out, however, none of those scores mattered, because three weeks after the fight, the New York State Athletic Commission changed the result from a technical decision for Camacho to a no-contest. Leija promoter Lester Bedford, in a formal complaint filed the week after the bout, insisted that because the cut itself did not stop the fight, Camacho's withdrawal should have given Leija, 42-5-1 (17) with 1 no-contest, a TKO win. But the NYSAC came up with the bizarre ruling that because the sixth round hadn't begun, the fight never should have gone to the cards. It seemed more a case of compromising to pacify all parties than actually trying to reach the most just decision.

Many experts thought Camacho's speed would be too much for the older Leija, who was celebrating his 35th birthday that night. For the first two minutes or so, those experts seemed to be correct, as the southpaw Camacho, 140¼, Puerto Rico, used his jab and his straight left to pepper Leija and open a sizable cut over his left eye. But with about 30 seconds to go in the round, Leija, 139¾, San Antonio, Texas, stepped inside and rocked Camacho with a right-left combination, scrambling his brain and forcing him to hold.

Camacho had regained his bearings by round two, but again Leija scored with plenty of powershots, most notably a right cross that jerked "Macho Junior's" head around. The third and fourth were much better rounds for the young Puerto Rican, as he staggered Leija with left hands and, by the end of the fourth, had gained the confidence to clown around while Leija tried to hit him. But in the fifth, that confidence evaporated when Camacho felt his own blood flowing, and he ran, held, and ate punches until the bell saved him.

Although Camacho kept his unbeaten record at 32-0 (18) with 1 no-contest, his stock dropped immeasurably. When asked at the postfight press conference if he felt good about the way the fight ended, Camacho seemed only to be partially aware of the potential consequences of his actions.

"No, I don't feel good," Camacho said, "but I was ahead before the butt. I took a hard shot in the first round, and I kept going."

As we went to press, a rematch was being negotiated for the fall, with San Antonio the likely site and October 13 the likely date.

Television: HBO
Promoter: America Presents
(7-7-01)
Eric Raskin

Kirk Johnson W 12 Larry Donald

Brooklyn, New York: There is a bromide in boxing circles as to how to determine the winner of a fight. Simply look at the fighters after the bout is over, and decide who you would rather be. In most cases, the fighter less banged up is the winner. Not this time. No one in the HBO viewing audience, nor those in the stands at Coney Island's Keyspan Park, wanted to be Johnson. Both of the former Canadian Olympian's eyes were purplish and swollen, the right eye totally shut. Donald was hardly marked up. But Johnson was the clear winner.

"There were times when I could hardly see him at all, and I think that began around the sixth," said Johnson. "I was pleased with my conditioning, and I just wanted to prove to people I could fight 12 hard rounds."

With the victory, Johnson, 32-0-1 (23), earned the number-one

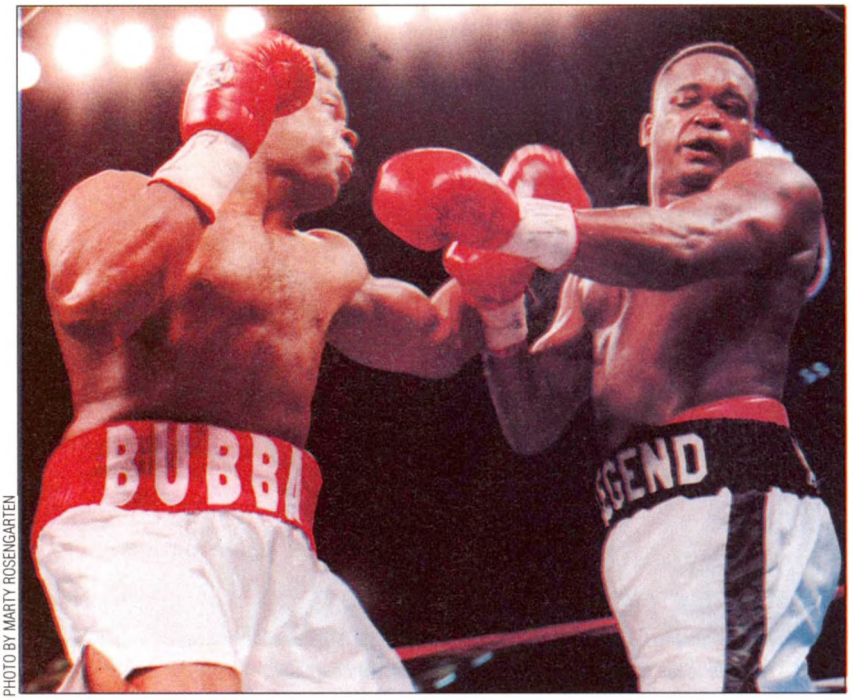


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Reluctant Donald takes a left from Johnson

ranking in the WBA, while Donald, 38-2-2 (23), was left wondering what went wrong. "The first five rounds I was hurting Kirk; I was hurting Kirk with my jab, but I could have started faster," Donald, 34, admitted.

The 29-year-old Johnson, 239, stuck to a simple game plan, constantly attacking Donald, 238¼, Cincinnati, Ohio, to the body with jabs and powershots. The real difference for much of the fight was Johnson's ability to engage Donald, and Donald's either inability or reluctance to risk getting too involved.

Minutes into the first round, Johnson's left eye appeared puffy after he took a few Donald jabs to the face. By the sixth, Johnson's right eye began to swell, and by the end of the fight, Johnson wore a distorted mask of bruises and lumps. Meanwhile, Donald was content staying on the outside, jabbing away and hardly taking any chances to fire a powershot.

"Kirk started faster than I wanted," said former welterweight champion Curtis Cokes, Johnson's trainer. "The plan was to dig to the body with the right hand. We couldn't land that left hook, though. That's what we wanted."

Still, Johnson won a unanimous decision, convincing judge Tom Kaczmarek (USA) to score it 116-112, Oscar Perez (Dominican Republic) to see it 115-113, and Fred Ucci (USA) to score the fight 118-110 for Johnson. THE RING gave Johnson a 119-113 decision. Jim Santa (USA) was the referee.

Television: HBO

Promoters: America Presents, Cedric Kushner Promotions

(7-7-01)

Joe Santoliquito

Micky Ward W 10 Emanuel Burton

Hampton Beach, New Hampshire: You know what you're going to get with Ward, the 35-year-old slugger with a reputation for fighting every round as if it's his last. But with Burton, you're not quite sure if you're going to get the determined slickster who pushed Floyd Mayweather and punished Mike Griffith, or the clowning journeyman who frequently dogs his way to defeat. Thankfully for the crowd of about 2,000 at Hampton Beach Casino and for boxing fans across the nation glued to ESPN2, the right version of Burton showed up, and he and Ward extended each other to the limits of their physical and mental capabilities in a battle worthy of serious Fight of the Year consideration.

The judging, however, was every bit as nauseating as the fight was exhilarating. The three New England-based judges all scored for Lowell, Massachusetts, hero Ward after 10 nip-and-tuck rounds, with Jim Finnegan handing in a unreasonable 96-91 card, and Mike Nolan scoring it a flat-out unconscionable 98-90. John Stevens' 96-94 was the only realistic scorecard of the three. THE RING thought Ward eked it out, 96-95.

Ward, 141, won the first round by pinning Burton, 140½, Chicago, Illinois, on the ropes for virtually the entire three minutes, digging in with left hands while Burton slipped and countered when he could. Burton was never noticeably hurt, but Nolan scored the round 10-8, and Finnegan made it 10-7, crystal clear indications that Burton could only win by knockout. Over the next nine rounds, he tried his best to do exactly that.

Burton used slick defense and exceptional toughness to weather Ward's storms, while Ward relied on toughness and supreme conditioning when Burton dominated rounds four, five, and seven

PHOTO BY ANGIE CARLINO

Burton and Ward wage a battle for the ages

and seemed to have "Irish Micky" on the verge of collapse. Burton, 26, hurt the local favorite with a left to the body in the seventh, an unforgettable round that was highlighted by a chilling exchange over the final 20 seconds.

Ward, 37-10 (27), made a comeback in the eighth, then came through in the ninth with a knockdown that would seal the victory. He used his trademark head-then-body left hook combination three times in a row, and the third time his fist found Burton's solar plexus, the young veteran collapsed to a knee. But Burton, 24-18-4 (12), beat the count of referee Steve Smoger (USA), and battled back in a brilliant 10th round that saw Ward wing 175 punches, according to Compu-Box. It was truly an amazing fight, a display of sheer will by both combatants breathtaking enough to overshadow the shameful judging.

Promoter: S&L Boxing
(7-13-01)

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

Lucas lands the right that would put Catley to sleep

Pongsaklek Singwangcha KO 5 Hayato Asai

Nagoya, Japan: Thai southpaw Pongsaklek, 112, was impressive in his first defense of the WBC flyweight title, as he dropped Japanese challenger Asai, 112, twice in the fourth and once more in the next round to stop him at 0:47 of the fifth session at Aichi Martial Arts Hall.

The 23-year-old Pongsaklek was aggressive from the outset, stalking the trotting Asai. After controlling the first three rounds, the Thai champ caught Asai with a wicked southpaw right hook, flooring him. Asai fought back hard, but hit the deck again from another Pongsaklek right hook late in the round.

In the fifth, Pongsaklek swarmed over Asai, also 23, with a flurry of punches and put him down again. Asai, 16-3-2 (12), rose, but as the champ battered him from all angles, ref Bruce McTavish (New Zealand) intervened to save the loser from further punishment.

The fine victory raised Pongsaklek's credentials to 41-2 (24), including 32 straight wins.

Promoter: Toshiro Matsuo's Midori Promotions
(7-15-01)
Joe Koizumi

Eric Lucas KO 7 Glenn Catley

Montreal, Quebec: Finally, Canadian veteran Lucas is more than just that guy Roy Jones knocked out the day he played minor league basketball. Now, he's a world champion as well.

Making his third try at a major title, Lucas avenged a December '99 12th-round knockout loss to Catley with an unexpected show of power that netted him the WBC super middleweight belt stripped from Davey Hilton earlier this year. The 30-year-old Lucas scored just his 12th knockout on a 33-4-3 ledger when he squashed former titleholder Catley with a right hand to the jaw at the 1:15 mark of round seven, laying the Englishman flat on his back and prompting an immediate stoppage from referee Guadalupe Garcia (Mexico).

The fight, held before a crowd of roughly 13,000 fans at the Molson Centre, was competitive through the first five rounds. Catley, 167, started the first round jabbing very effectively, but let the close round slip away when Lucas, 167, knocked him off-balance with a left-right to the chin just before the bell. Catley had some more good moments in the second, jabbing and boxing well, but again Lucas' cleaner powerpunches—in this case a couple of good rights—seemed to win him the round.

There was an excellent exchange in the fourth, when both men landed left hooks, Lucas scored with a right hand, and the 29-year-old Catley came back with a pair of hard jabs that drew blood from the French-Canadian's nose. Catley was gaining some momentum, but in the fifth, Lucas scored with a thudding left hook that snapped Catley's head back.

By the sixth, Catley was well softened up, and Lucas took advantage. He hurt the out-of-towner with a couple of combinations, then sent him down to a knee with a well-placed right hand. Catley rose quickly, but soon went down again from what appeared to be a push, though Garcia ruled it another knockdown. The eight-count helped Catley make it to the bell, but Lucas was on him again quickly in the seventh, dictating the action before landing the long right hand that ended the fight.

Catley, 26-5 (20), was a gracious loser, raising the arm of the new champion. Lucas has been mandated to make his first defense against Dingaan Thobela, the South African who dethroned Catley before losing the title to Hilton.

Television: ESPN2
Promoter: Interbox
(7-10-01) ■

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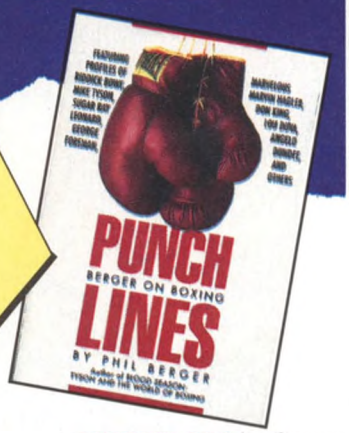

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New Face

(Continued from page 20)

seven brothers and sisters. He was looking for an opportunity in America, and regrettably, was a prime catch for opportunists. The soft-spoken Guyanan fell prey to the sweet-talking Bridges, who put Purlett up in his home under certain conditions, according to Purlett: that he serve as groundskeeper and handle house chores.

"Basically, Andre was doing his chores, feeding deer and different animals, and mowing the lawn," recalled Purlett's wife, Colleen, a pharmacy technician whom Purlett met in New York and who also originates from Guyana. "He had to take the garbage out and basically do whatever this manager said. I came down here to Florida to visit him, and I remember they weren't very nice people. I felt like Andre was being mistreated and he had no clue how boxers were treated in this country. He was from Guyana and he didn't know. Sometimes, I would think he was crazy to do these things. Sometimes, that got me mad. Looking back at the whole thing, they took advantage of him. The Andre today, no one will take advantage of. He learned a lesson."

Purlett himself laughs at the memory.

"I put that stuff behind me," said the 27-year-old Purlett. "I used to get paid $100 a week by this guy, and he had me feed his deer and things like that. He was a redneck kind of a guy. I really didn't know better. He lived in a high-class neighborhood, and I didn't really tell anybody what was going on, other than Colleen.

"I was fighting, and I was feeding his deer. It was kind of ridiculous, when you think about it. I can laugh about it now, because it taught me that in life you come across different people. I was just doing what I was told. The memory has helped me tremendously in the ring, because I don't want to be in that situation again."

Bridges denies Purlett's allegations of how he was treated under his management.

"Andre would feed the animals every now and then," Bridges said. "But I had maintenance people take care of my grounds. He didn't do anything but train for me. The only thing I could say about Andre was that he was a hard trainer and

that he was very dedicated to boxing. I'm sure he'll go a long ways."

Adam Pitluk, a sportswriter for the *Broward-Palm Beach New Times* who has covered a number of Purlett's fights, agrees. "To look at Andre in street clothes, he doesn't look like a prototypical heavyweight," he said. "He has one of the best drives in professional sports. That's why he looks more like a cruiserweight than a heavyweight. What you have in Andre when you watch him fight is someone with the power of a heavyweight, who gets out of the way like a cruiserweight. Together, it's a beautiful combination. I personally think Andre has the possibility of being a top-three contender within the next year."

Purlett, the second-oldest of eight kids, grew up in a hard-scrabble section of Georgetown. It was a bustling, rough area full of flea markets and preying street gangs. Purlett skirted that way of life with a disciplined upbringing. One step out of line, and Purlett's father, Courtney, had no trouble pouncing on his oldest son. Purlett grew up respectful of authority, and slightly fearful of the tall, skinny, former military man.

"My father was very tough on me growing up," Purlett remembered. "He just wanted me to do the right things, so I took quite a few beatings growing up, but I took what he taught me into my adult life. Now that I'm a parent, I understand why my dad wanted me as a boy to do the right things, and stay on the right track. I never had any trouble with the law, and there were a lot of temptations growing up."

It also didn't help that Purlett was a geeky kid. He took some beatings at home, but even more punishment on the streets. Though he was big for his age, Purlett was a constant target for bullies. Purlett says there was one kid who would pound on him and take his lunch money every day.

One of Purlett's strengths is his ability to laugh about those hardships. He says that the rocky times sculpted him into the fighter he is today.

Herman Caicedo, Purlett's trainer, calls his compact, agile fighter a clone of four-time former heavyweight champ Evander Holyfield. He's built experience through sparring with contenders David Tua, Shannon Briggs, and Lamon Brewster, as well as former heavyweight champ Michael Moorer. What sets Purlett apart, according to Caicedo, is his manic compulsion to train.

"Andre has an incredible work ethic," Caicedo said. "We come with a list from A-to-Z, and he's asking for Z-plus to do. He's constantly in the gym and he has a lot of motivation and a lot of desire. He's done fantastic in sparring sessions with guys like Tua, Briggs, Moorer, Brewster, and we've done this stuff for free. I wanted to expose Andre to as many high quality fighters as I could. You're not going to improve as a fighter if you haven't worked with guys better than you. I want him to feel pressure when he's sparring. I don't want him to feel comfortable at all in the ring."

Feeling uncomfortable is something Purlett is plenty used to. But at least outside the ring, he doesn't have to worry about it anymore. ■

WORLDWIDE RATINGS

The ratings of the three major governing bodies recognized by The Ring are supplied by the organizations themselves. They are updated on these pages as soon as they are made available to us. In this issue, the WBA ratings were compiled as of July 2001, the WBC as of August 2001, and the IBF as of July 2001.

HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Hasim Rahman (USA)	C	–	C
John Ruiz (USA)	–	C	–
Mike Tyson (USA)	1	6	5
Lennox Lewis (GB)	2	4	4
Vitaly Klitschko (UKR)	3	3	–
Kirk Johnson (CAN)	4	–	3
Lance Whitaker (USA)	5	5	6
David Tua (NZ)	6	8	1
Fres Oquendo (USA)	7	–	7
Larry Donald (USA)	8	9	9
Henry Akinwande (GB)	9	7	8
Vaughn Bean (USA)	10	12	–
Kirk Johnson (CAN)	–	1	–
Evander Holyfield (USA)	–	2	–
Nicolay Valouev (RUS)	26	10	–
Chris Byrd (USA)	19	–	2
Danell Nicholson (USA)	23	–	10

CRUISERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Juan Carlos Gomez (CUBA)	C	–	–
Virgil Hill (USA)	–	C	–
Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)	–	–	C
Louis Azille (DR)	1	4	9
Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)	2	–	–
Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)	3	11	–
Alexander Gurov (UKR)	4	2	6
Dale Brown (CAN)	5	–	–
Jean Mark Mormeck (FRA)	6	1	–
Arthur Williams (USA)	7	6	3
O'Neil Bell (USA)	8	12	–
Carlos Cruzat (CHI)	9	–	–
Carl Thompson (GB)	10	7	8
James Toney (USA)	–	3	4
Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)	12	5	–
Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)	–	8	–
Andre Purlett (GUY)	–	9	–
Imamu Mayfield (USA)	21	10	7
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Lou Del Valle (USA)	–	–	5
Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)	–	–	10

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Roy Jones (USA)	C	C	C
Clinton Woods (GB)	1	4	6
Yawe Davis (ITA)	2	–	–
Reggie Johnson (USA)	3	5	2
Mads Larsen (DEN)	4	–	–
Eric Harding (USA)	5	–	3
Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)	6	3	1
Antonio Tarver (USA)	7	7	4
Julio Gonzalez (USA)	8	9	7
Montell Griffin (USA)	9	11	–
Michael Nunn (USA)	10	–	–
Lou Del Valle (USA)	–	1	–
Bruno Girard (FRA)	–	2	5
Robert Koon (USA)	18	6	–
David Telesco (USA)	–	8	8
Glencoffe Johnson (USA)	–	10	10
Will Taylor (USA)	–	–	9

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Eric Lucas (CAN)	C	–	–
Byron Mitchell (USA)	–	C	–
Sven Ottke (GER)	–	–	C
Dingaan Thobela (SA)	1	–	–
Markus Beyer (GER)	2	–	6
Omar Sheika (USA)	3	6	4
David Reid (USA)	4	–	7
David Starie (GB)	5	7	5
Glenn Catley (GB)	6	–	–
Nordin Ben Salah (HOL)	7	–	–
Thomas Tate (USA)	8	8	3
Danilo Haussler (GER)	9	11	–
Dana Rosenblatt (USA)	10	2	12
Vacant	–	1	2
Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)	18	3	–
Manuel Siacca (PR)	–	4	–
Mads Larsen (DEN)	–	5	11
Rudy Markussen (DEN)	14	9	–
Mikkel Kessler (DEN)	17	10	–
James Butler (USA)	13	–	1
Antwun Echols (USA)	11	–	8
Bruno Girard (FRA)	–	–	9
Charles Brewer (USA)	27	–	10

MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Bernard Hopkins (USA)	C	–	C
Felix Trinidad (PR)	–	C	–
Erland Betare (FRA)	1	–	6
Howard Eastman (GB)	2	1	4
Tito Mendoza (PAN)	3	10	3
Kevin Palmer (USA)	4	–	–
Cristian Sanavia (ITA)	5	–	–
William Joppy (USA)	6	3	7
Keith Holmes (USA)	7	6	5
Carl Daniels (USA)	8	11	1
Morrade Hakkar (FRA)	9	–	–
Jerry Elliott (NIG)	10	–	–
David Reid (USA)	–	2	–
Darren Obah (AUSTRL)	–	4	–
Julio Cesar Green (DR)	–	5	–
Hassine Cherifi (FRA)	–	7	9
Antonio Perugino (ITA)	14	8	–
Ryan Rhodes (GB)	–	9	–
Vacant	–	–	2
Brian Barbosa (USA)	15	–	8
Raymond Joval (HOL)	20	–	10

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Oscar De La Hoya (USA)	C	–	–
Vacant	–	C	C
Roman Karmazin (RUS)	1	6	–
Francisco Castillejo (SPA)	2	–	9
J.C. Candelo (COL)	3	8	6
Travis Simms (USA)	4	11	11
Fitz Vanderpool (CAN)	5	–	–
Quirino Garcia (MEX)	6	–	10
Mamadou Thiam (FRA)	7	4	–
Bronco McKart (USA)	8	–	3
Yory Boy Campas (MEX)	9	–	–
Alex Bunema (USA)	10	–	7
Jose Flores (MEX)	–	1	8
Fernando Vargas (USA)	–	2	4
Winky Wright (USA)	–	3	1
Ike Quartey (GHA)	–	5	–
Frank Olsen (DEN)	19	7	–
Santiago Samaniego (PAN)	–	9	–
Kevin Kelly (USA)	–	10	–
Robert Frazier (USA)	–	–	2
Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)	30	–	5

WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Shane Mosley (USA)	C	–	–
Andrew Lewis (GUY)	–	C	–
Vernon Forrest (USA)	–	–	C
Jose Luis Cruz (MEX)	1	–	–
Carlos Baldomir (ARG)	2	7	–
Danny Perez (USA)	3	8	7
Thomas Damgaard (DEN)	4	2	6
Michele Piccirillo (ITA)	5	5	4
Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)	6	–	–
Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)	7	–	9
Alessandro Duran (ITA)	8	–	–
Manuel Gomez (MEX)	9	–	–
Cory Spinks (USA)	10	–	5
Ricardo Mayorga (CR)	–	1	–
Michael Trabant (GERE)	–	3	–
Chantel Stanciel (USA)	17	4	–
James Page (USA)	–	6	–
Arturo Gatti (USA)	–	9	–
Frederic Klose (FRA)	20	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Rafael Pineda (COL)	13	–	3
Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)	–	–	8
Oba Carr (USA)	18	–	10

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)	C	C	–
Zab Judah (USA)	–	–	C
Gianluca Branco (ITA)	1	11	–
Oktay Urkal (TUR)	2	9	8
Ray Oliveira (USA)	3	–	6
Hector Camacho Jr (PR)	4	1	3

Eamonn Magee (GB)	5	–	–
Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS)	6	–	–
Gabriel Mapuoka (FRA)	7	–	12
Terronn Millett (USA)	8	–	4
Sharmba Mitchell (USA)	9	4	9
Masakazu Satake (JAP)	10	–	–
Diobelis Hurtado (CUB)	–	2	–
Randall Bailey (USA)	–	3	5
Khalid Rahilou (FRA)	–	5	–
Ricky Hatton (GB)	11	6	–
Alex Trujillo (PR)	–	7	–
Hiroyuki Maeda (JAP)	28	8	–
Demetrio Ceballos (PAN)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Antonio Diaz (USA)	16	12	7
Carlos Vilches (ARG)	–	–	10

LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Julien Lorcy (FRA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Paul Spadafora (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Steve Johnston (USA)	1	–	5
Lakva Sim (MON)	2	–	–
Juan Lazcano (USA)	3	10	7
Lovemore Ndou (SA)	4	–	–
Alex Trujillo (PR)	5	–	–
Stefano Zoff (ITA)	6	5	–
Lawrence Ngobeni (SA)	7	–	–
Carlos Gerena (PR)	8	–	–
Dennis Holbaek (DEN)	9	11	11
Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)	10	–	3
Raul Balbi (ARG)	–	1	–
Rick Yoshimura (JAP)	–	2	–
Miguel Callist (PAN)	–	3	–
Takanori Hatakeyama (JAP)	13	4	–
Julio Diaz (USA)	16	6	8
Edson Xuxa Nascimento (BRA)	28	7	9
Juan Gomez-Trinidad (PR)	17	8	12
Alberto Sicurella (ARG)	11	9	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Angel Manfredy (USA)	–	–	4
Acelino Freitas (BRA)	–	–	6
Efren Hinojosa (USA)	–	–	10

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Floyd Mayweather (USA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Joel Casamayor (CUB)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Steve Forbes (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Jesus Chavez (USA)	1	8	3
Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)	2	–	–
Kengo Nagashima (JAP)	3	–	–
Tiger Ari (PHIL)	4	–	–
Randy Suico (PHIL)	5	–	–
Philip Ndou (SA)	6	–	6
Affif Djelti (FRA)	7	–	–
Tontcho Tontchev (BUL)	8	2	8
Carlos Hernandez (EL SALV)	9	–	–
Alejandro Gonzalez (MEX)	10	–	–
Lakva Sim (MON)	–	1	–
Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)	18	3	–
Jongkwon Baek (KOR)	–	4	–
Lamont Pearson (USA)	16	5	1
Luis Navarro (USA)	13	6	–
Jorge Barrios (ARG)	–	7	–
Jose Miguel Cotto (PR)	23	9	–
Kinji Amano (JAP)	24	10	–
John Brown (USA)	–	–	2
Raul Balbi (ARG)	–	–	4
David Santos (USA)	–	–	5
Ernesto Zepeda (MEX)	14	–	7
Daniel Attah (NIG)	–	–	9
Carlos Hernandez (USA)	–	–	10

FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Erik Morales (MEX)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Derrick Gainer (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Frankie Toledo (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Guty Espadas (MEX)	1	–	–
Injin Chi (KOR)	2	12	–
Naseem Hamed (GB)	3	1	8
Johnny Tapia (USA)	4	7	6
Manuel Calvo (SPA)	5	–	–
Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)	6	–	–
Scott Harrison (GB)	7	–	–
Augie Sanchez (USA)	8	–	3
Anthony Tshehla (SA)	9	–	–
Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)	10	–	–
Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)	–	2	–
Daniel Seda (PR)	17	3	–
Victor Polo (COL)	–	4	2
Philip Ndou (SA)	–	5	–
Lewis Woods (US)	30	6	–
Armando Cordoba (PAN)	27	8	–
Angel Vasquez (PR)	–	9	5
Istvan Kovacs (HUN)	–	10	12
Manuel Medina (MEX)	13	–	1
Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)	–	–	4
Mbulelo Botile (SA)	–	–	7
David Toledo (USA)	–	–	9
Oscar Larios (MEX)	–	–	10

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Willie Jorrin (USA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Vacant	**–**	**C**	**1**
Manny Pacquaio (PHIL)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Michael Brodie (GB)	1	–	12
Israel Vazquez (MEX)	2	–	–
Oscar Larios (MEX)	3	–	–
Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)	4	–	–
Wayne McCullough (IRE)	5	–	–
Osamu Sato (JAP)	6	8	–
Salim Medjkoune (FRA)	7	5	6
Marcos Licona (USA)	8	–	–
Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)	9	–	–
Kiattisak Chocchoi (THAI)	10	–	–
Yobert Ortega (VEN)	–	1	–
Jose Rojas (VEN)	–	2	–
Sithyodthong Yoddamrong (THAI)	–	3	–
Enrique Sanchez (MEX)	–	4	3
Danny Romero (USA)	–	6	–
Kozo Ishii (JAP)	16	7	–
Israel Vasquez (MEX)	–	9	–
Johnny Armour (GB)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	2
F. Rakkiatgym (INDO)	–	–	4
Hector Julia Avila (DR)	12	–	5
Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)	11	–	7
Fahsung 3K-Battery (THAI)	–	–	8
Jose Luis Valbuena (ARG)	–	–	9
David Donis (USA)	–	–	10

BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Paul Ayala (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Tim Austin (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Genaro Garcia (USA)	1	10	–
Adan Vargas (MEX)	2	2	4
Jess Maca (PHIL)	3	–	–
Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)	4	–	–
Johnny Bredahl (DEN)	5	4	8
Diego Morales (MEX)	6	–	–
Rafael Marquez (MEX)	7	7	5
Mark Johnson (USA)	8	–	–
Ricardo Barajas (MEX)	9	–	–
Jorge Lacierva (MEX)	10	–	–
Eidy Moya (VEN)	–	1	–
Leo Gamez (VEN)	–	3	–
Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)	–	5	–
Sahoiu Sithchai Condo (THAI)	–	6	–
Hugo Dianzo (MEX)	–	8	–
Diego Morales (MEX)	–	9	9
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Pete Frissina (USA)	–	–	3
Danny Romero (USA)	–	–	6
Juan Cordoba (ARG)	–	–	7
Jesus Perez (COL)	–	–	10

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Masanori Tokuyama (JAP)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Setsuo Kobayashi (JAP)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Felix Machado (VEN)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)	1	–	10
Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)	2	12	–
Kazuhiro Ryuko (JAP)	3	–	–
Martin Castillo (MEX)	4	–	3
Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)	5	–	–
Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)	6	–	–
Vernie Torres (USA)	7	–	5
Luis Bolanos (COL)	8	11	9
Oscar Andrade (MEX)	9	–	–
Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)	10	2	6
Alexander Munoz (VEN)	–	1	–
Mbwana Matumla (TNZ)	–	3	–
Jesus Rojas (VEN)	–	4	4
Sornpichai Pisnurachank (THAI)	–	5	–
Hideki Todaka (JAP)	12	6	–
Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)	–	7	–
Kazuhiro Ryuko (JAP)	–	8	–
Adonis Rivas (NIC)	–	9	7
Samson 3K-Battery (THAI)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Jose Cotto (USA)	–	–	8

FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Eric Morel (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Irene Pacheco (COL)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Alex Ali Baba (GHA)	1	–	7
Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)	2	–	–
Mike Trejo (USA)	3	4	4
Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)	4	6	3
Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)	5	12	–
Wandee Chor Chareon (THAI)	6	–	–
Randy Mangubat (PHIL)	7	–	–
Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)	8	–	–
Masaki Nakamuna (JAP)	9	8	–
Damaen Kelly (GB)	10	10	–
Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)	–	1	–
Mzukisi Sikali (SA)	21	2	–
Isidro Garcia (MEX)	–	3	–
Alejandro Montiel (MEX)	12	5	–
Jose Lopez (VEN)	–	7	–
Gilberto Gonzalez (VEN)	–	9	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Hawk Makepula (SA)	–	–	5
David Guerault (FRA)	19	–	6
Ferid Ben Jeddou (TUN)	–	–	8
Angel Priolo (COL)	–	–	9
Hussein Hussein (LEB)	–	–	10

JR. FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Yosam Choi (KOR)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Ricardo Lopez (MEX)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Jorge Arce (MEX)	1	5	3
Juanito Rubillar (PHIL)	2	–	–
Hidenobu Honda (JAP)	3	2	–
Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)	4	6	6
Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)	5	11	4
Jesus Martinez (MEX)	6	–	–
Takayuki Korogi (JAP)	7	–	–
Eric Ortiz (MEX)	8	8	–
Agustin Luna (MEX)	9	–	–
Pilkoo Kang (KOR)	10	–	–
Pichitnoi C. Siriwat (THAI)	–	1	–
Yura Dimas (MON)	–	3	–
Bebis Mendoza (COL)	–	4	11
Deeden Kengkarun (THAI)	–	7	–
Wolf Tokimitsu (JAP)	–	9	–
Masibulele Makepula (SA)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Zolani Petelo (SA)	11	–	2
Fahlan Sakreerin (THAI)	–	–	5
Juan Keb Baas (MEX)	22	–	7
Everardo Morales (MEX)	–	–	8
Anis Roga (INDO)	–	–	9
Gerson Guerrero (MEX)	–	–	10

STRAWWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Chana Porpaoin (THAI)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Roberto Leyva (MEX)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP)	1	–	–
Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)	2	–	–
Khulile Makeba (SA)	3	12	–
Joma Gamboa (PHIL)	4	4	10
Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)	5	6	6
Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)	6	–	–
Erdene Chuluun (MON)	7	–	–
Isaac Bustos (MEX)	8	–	–
Noel Arambulet (VEN)	9	1	–
Noel Tunacao (PHIL)	10	–	–
Jose Garcia (COL)	–	2	–
Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)	–	3	–
Kim Ki Hwan (KOR)	–	5	–
Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)	–	7	7
Fasan Pongsawan (THAI)	–	8	–
Yutaka Niida (JAP)	–	9	–
Daniel Reyes (COL)	–	10	5
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Wandee Chor Chareon (THAI)	–	–	3
Miguel Barrera (MEX)	13	–	4
Surachai Saengmorokot (THAI)	–	–	8
Mohamed Rachman (INDO)	27	–	9

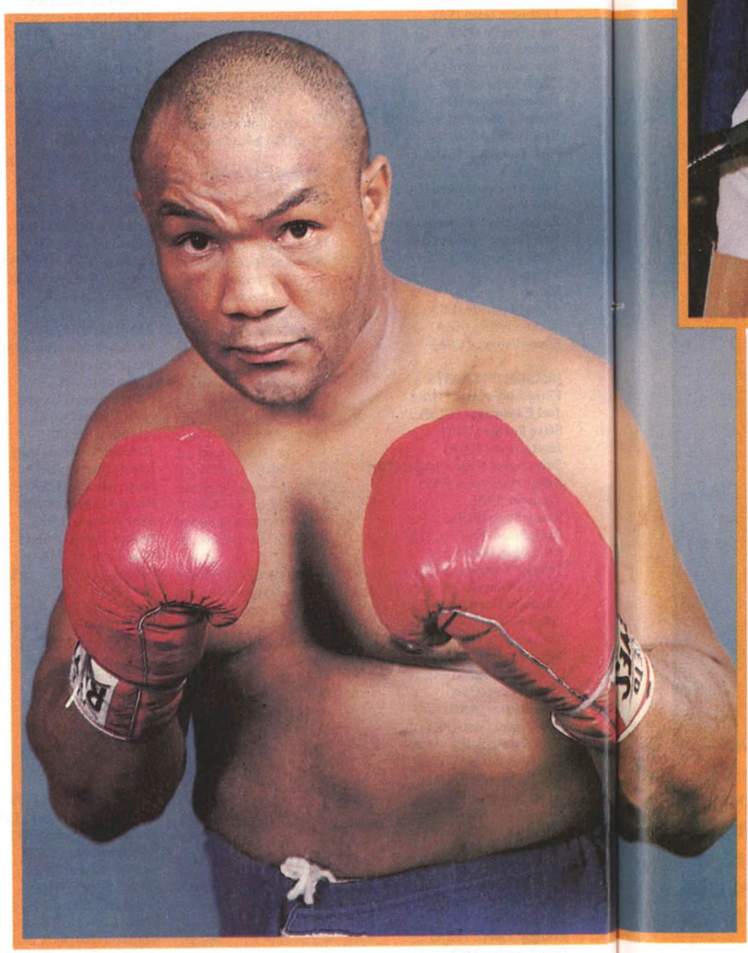
CLASSIC

From THE RING, May 1988

THE COMEBACK CONTINUES

Foreman Sets Sights On Tyson

By Jack Welsh



Bob Arum may be on the verge of acquiring a new sobriquet—the miracle worker—if he can produce his midsummer night's dream of guiding George Foreman to a second chance at the heavyweight championship. Of course, by the time you read this, Big George might be back in Houston thumping the Bible instead of belting out the collection of "opponents" Uncle Bob has lined up. But that's highly unlikely when the next scheduled victim is that renowned Swede, Anders Eklund.

Foreman, still remembered for the African classic when Muhammad Ali created "Rope-A-Dope" to win back the heavyweight crown in Kinshasa, Zaire, in 1974, became part of Arum's livery when he was invited to Las Vegas last October to confer with the promoter, while Thomas Hearns hammered down the wild bid of Juan Domingo Roldan.

The gentle giant from Texas turned 40 January 22, ironically the same night Mike Tyson proved sand in the hour glass doesn't flip-flop, viciously re-retiring a courageous but spent Larry Holmes in Atlantic City.

Unmoved by Holmes' failure to turn back the calendar, a 243-pound Foreman was in Orlando, Florida, the next night trimming someone named Tom Trimm (another nondescript boxer with a 26-12-1 record) less than a minute into the opening round. The quick punchout attracted little attention over the wire services, but it triggered another return two weeks later to Caesars Palace, where Foreman once turned in one of his most spectacular outings, twice getting off the floor to stop Ron Lyle in one of heavyweight history's most explosive bouts.

Age was never a concern for George Foreman. "Big George" turned 40, yet had showed enough fighting ability to grab the attention of promoter Bob Arum, who felt Foreman could still enter the Mike Tyson sweepstakes.

This time Foreman was in with Guido Trane, a Paisan in his first Atlantic crossing as Italian heavyweight titleholder; once again, the Foreman might—and perhaps myth—was rekindled when the ex-champ stopped his man in five rounds, an exercise viewed nationally via ESPN.

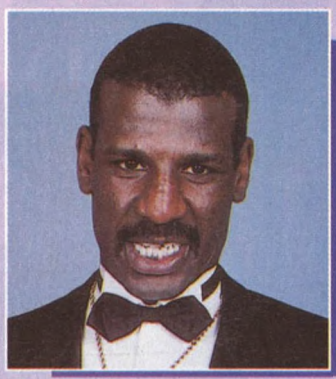
The triumph was "The Houston Hammer's" seventh straight since ending a 10-year hiatus from boxing with a fourth-round kayo over Steve Zouski, March 9, 1987, in Sacramento. This march through unranked, untalented, and unknown opposition has pushed his career record (going back to 1969) to 52-2 (49).

However, it has been religion, not knockouts, that has turned Foreman's life around.

"Ten years ago the best thing that could happen to me was to find a nice horse or a dog to be buddies with. But when you find the ministry, you get a certain understanding," Foreman explained. "The next thing you know, the greatest creation of all is not

Foreman crushed Italian heavyweight champ Guido Trane in five rounds at Caesars Palace, the same arena where a young Foreman once had to twice climb off the canvas to beat Ron Lyle. The triumph was Foreman's seventh straight since he began his comeback.

THE RING RATINGS, May 1988



Michael Spinks

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Michael Spinks, Missouri
1. **Mike Tyson**, New York
2. **Evander Holyfield**, Georgia
3. **Tony Tucker**, Michigan
4. **Tim Witherspoon**, Pennsylvania
5. **Pinklon Thomas**, Michigan
6. **Carl Williams**, New York
7. **Trevor Berbick**, Florida
8. **Adilson Rodrigues**, Brazil
9. **Tyrell Biggs**, Pennsylvania
10. **Mike Weaver**, California

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Charles Williams**, Ohio
2. **Virgil Hill**, North Dakota
3. **Bobby Czyz**, New Jersey
4. **Leslie Stewart**, Trinidad
5. **Dennis Andries**, England
6. **Tony Willis**, Illinois
7. **Don Lalonde**, Canada
8. **Chong-Pal Park**, Korea
9. **Lindell Holmes**, Michigan
10. **Ramzi Hassan**, California

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Thomas Hearns**, Michigan
2. **Marvin Hagler**, Massachusetts
3. **Frank Tate**, Texas
4. **Sumbu Kalambay**, Italy
5. **Mike McCallum**, Jamaica
6. **Michael Nunn**, California
7. **Michael Olajide**, Canada
8. **Iran Barkley**, New York
9. **Matthew Hilton**, Canada
10. **Herol Graham**, England

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Jorge Vaca, Mexico
1. **Marlon Starling**, Connecticut
2. **Lloyd Honeyghan**, England
3. **Maurice Blocker**, Washington, D.C.
4. **Mark Breland**, New York
5. **Simon Brown**, Washington, D.C.
6. **Rollin Williams**, Arizona
7. **Juan Martin Coggi**, Argentina
8. **Tyrone Trice**, Michigan
9. **Roger Mayweather**, Nevada
10. **Frankie Warren**, Texas

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Julio Cesar Chavez**, Mexico
2. **Vinny Pazienza**, Rhode Island
3. **Pernell Whitaker**, Virgnia
4. **Jose Luis Ramirez**, Mexico
5. **Edwin Rosario**, Puerto Rico
6. **Meldrick Taylor**, Pennsylvania
7. **Greg Haugen**, Washington
8. **Primo Ramos**, Mexico
9. **Rocky Lockridge**, New Jersey
10. **Amancio Castro**, Colombia

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Antonio Esparragoza, Venezuela
1. **Azumah Nelson**, Ghana
2. **Jeff Fenech**, Australia
3. **Calvin Grove**, Pennsylvania
4. **Julio Gervacio**, Dominican Republic
5. **Jeff Franklin**, Nevada
6. **Victor Callejas**, Puerto Rico
7. **Hector Lopez**, California
8. **Marcos Villasana**, Mexico
9. **Steve Cruz**, Texas
10. **Louie Espinosa**, Arizona

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Miguel Lora**, Colombia
2. **Kaosai Galaxy**, Thailand
3. **Sugar Ray Rojas**, Colombia
4. **Kelvin Seabrooks**, South Carolina
5. **Raul Perez**, Mexico
6. **Wilfredo Vasquez**, Puerto Rico
7. **Santos Laciar**, Argentina
8. **Gilberto Roman**, Mexico
9. **Frankie Duarte**, California
10. **Gaby Canizales**, Texas

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Sot Chitalada, Thailand
1. **Jung-Koo Chang**, Korea
2. **Fidel Bassa**, Colombia
3. **Myung-Woo Yuh**, Korea
4. **Hilario Zapata**, Panama
5. **Chang-Ho Choi**, Korea
6. **Gabriel Bernal**, Mexico
7. **Dodie Penalosa**, Philippines
8. **Paul Gonzales**, California
9. **Benedicto Murillo**, Panama
10. **Duke McKenzie**, England

a sports car, but a human being. For the last 10 years, I've loved being around people ... joking, laughing. I've learned man's best friend is not a dog, but another man, another woman.

"Sometimes, things can happen too quickly and you don't appreciate where you are. You start saying and doing anything you want. But for the last few years, I've been really happy because I found out the best things in life are free—truly free. I've been able to find out what they are and hold on tight to them."

Just like the late, great comedian Jack Benny long insisted, Foreman still likes to tell everybody, "I'm only 39." But *THE RING Record Book* discloses he was born January 22, 1948, in Marshall, Texas, where he still owns a 250-acre ranch, 200 miles east of Houston. The natal event was 25 years to the day before Foreman ruined Smokin' Joe Frazier's invincibility to win the title with a stunning two-round knockout in Kingston, Jamaica.

Arum and his associates feel there is a place for the 1968 Olympic heavyweight champion in the Tyson title sweepstakes, even in the face of a reputed $30-million showdown between "Iron Mike" and Michael Spinks, the IBF's defrocked ruler, still recognized as world champion by THE RING.

"I never tried to promote Foreman when he was champion, because I didn't like the people who were managing him. But I'm not talking about his trainers, Dick Sadler, Archie Moore, and Sandy Saddler," advised Arum. "Ron Weathers, who is an adviser for Top Rank in Texas,

Foreman kept Tyson in his sights throughout his comeback. Foreman happened to turn 40 the night Tyson dispensed of 38-year-old former heavyweight champ Larry Holmes.

called me about Foreman. At first, I wasn't interested. Then Foreman called me. He wanted to meet, so I invited him to Vegas the week of the Hearns-Roldan fight. Later, I had Bruce Trampler, my western matchmaker, check George out, and he suggested we take a chance. I'm astounded, but it looks like Foreman is getting better.

"George told me in the beginning if he didn't think he had a chance to win a Tyson fight, he wouldn't do it regardless of the money. But on the outcome, nobody knows until they get into the ring. But if George struggles with opponents on the way to a fight with Tyson, it will be ludicrous to even consider such a fight. Of course, nobody knew what Sugar Ray Leonard would do against Hagler until he did it."

Foreman is proud of the way he has pared down from 300-plus pounds since hitting the comeback trail.

"I had walked around for nine years weighing 320 pounds, eating and doing what I wanted. So when I went back to the ring at 260 and people said I was overweight, I'd look at them like they were crazy," Foreman told THE RING. "I felt like I was a streamlined young man. Before I ever started thinking about boxing again, I was working with kids, directing them away from trouble and giving my attention to the church. I just wasn't interested in sports.

"I was teaching the kids boxing and weightlifting, and the next thing I knew I was in the ring sparring with them. The kids started telling me I should come back. At 39, I never considered people would say I'm old. I can still hit hard, I can jump out of the way [of punches] ... I'm a boxer. I know how to fight in the ring, so why not? I feel a lot better doing it now than I did 10 years ago.

"When I was champion, I'd run only three or four miles a day. When I started back this time, I ran seven to 10 miles a day—and I enjoy it. Before, I'd only spend 45 minutes in the gym. Now the daily schedule is usually an hour and one-half. I'm hitting the bag harder now. My legs are stronger. All the pictures of George Foreman the young fighter are off the wall back home. I'm looking for new trophies, new records. I know the George Foreman of 10 years ago couldn't beat the George Foreman of today."

As gregarious as Foreman has emerged during his second coming, he stays within himself discussing his family. As we go to press, George and Joann (his fifth wife) are expecting a baby to join a clan which already includes daughters Michi, Georgette, Leona, and Freeda, and sons George Jr. and George III.

"I'm getting to be a celebrity around the house again," said Foreman with a grin. "For the last four years my wife, Joann, would argue with me about taking out the garbage. Once I started doing road work and my muscles started showing again, she never asked me to take out the garbage again."

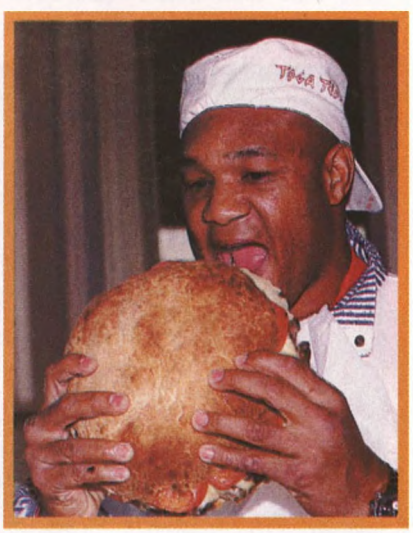
Foreman's parents are also still very much a part of his life. Though they remain among his most devoted fans, Nancy and J.D. Foreman are separated and sit on opposite sides of the aisle in the church where he preaches Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays—even when in training for a fight. Papa Foreman also works full-time as a caretaker at Foreman's First Church of Jesus Christ.

"I'm a full-time pastor who is moonlighting as a boxer. But the reason I came back is M-O-N-E-Y and a chance to win back the title," admitted Foreman. "Boxing was my profession, and I was able to get in at a young age and make some money. Then I realized as the years went by that I needed more money for my charitable enterprises."

Yes, Foreman is back. But is there really a serious chance he'll fight Tyson?

"We are not giving George Foreman any credibility at the moment," said Bill Cayton, Tyson's co-manager. "However, if he beats one of the top five contenders, we'd definitely give him some consideration for the future."

Arum—and perhaps the paying public—is justified in asking, "Why not?" After all, Tyson's immediate future includes Tony Tubbs in Tokyo, Frank Bruno (if the Spinks bout stalls) in



Eating was one of Foreman's favorite things to do during his 10-year hiatus from boxing. Big George blew up to around 320 pounds before he returned to the ring. After some training, Foreman pared down to 260.

London, and Francesco Damiani in Italy.

The blessing here for the American boxing purist is that the tainted trio is overseas.

"I talked with Jim Jacobs [the other half of Tyson's managerial team] a few days after Tyson's fight with Holmes, and we're in agreement that a fight with Foreman is a possibility, perhaps sometime this year," Arum said. "It depends on what happens and if George can reach a top-10 rating. We're talking about recognizable names in the U.S., people like Trevor Berbick, Pinklon Thomas, and Tim Witherspoon. Any of those three would be outstanding opponents for Foreman."

Arum does not believe the unmasking of Holmes as a 38-year-old fighting relic will loom as a detriment in Foreman's campaign to regain the heavyweight title he lost to Ali.

"The difference is Holmes went against Tyson untested. Since he stayed at home in Easton to train, there weren't any open workouts. The public hadn't seen Holmes in 22 months. Foreman will be an open book. The public can make up its own mind. They will have seen George fight and they will have seen him train. Right now, it is more of getting the idea to the public that Foreman is back, rather than testing him too early."

Top Rank's board chairman, who sometimes startles the press with outlandish statements, contends he's not trying to create an illusion.

"I really believe Tyson-Foreman would be bigger than Tyson-Spinks because the man on the street really doesn't think Spinks can win, whereas he does give Foreman a chance, on his size and power, to beat Tyson. As far as I'm concerned, I'm not sure Foreman can beat Tyson, but the Foreman I remember back in the '70s would have knocked Tyson cold.

"If we can get Foreman back in the best possible shape ... but at 40, I don't know. People say athletes are over the hill at 40, but look at Jersey Joe Walcott, who won the title at 37, and Archie Moore, who knocked down Rocky Marciano at 42. Remember, George didn't take too much punishment."

Arum's contention that people haven't forgotten the former champ with howitzers for fists seemed to hold up when he brought Foreman to Las Vegas a week before Christmas for a 10-rounder on ESPN at Bally's on the Strip. Foreman pulled a record-breaking 2,500 fans into Bally's ballroom to see him pummel Rocky Sekorski into a TKO defeat 2:48 into the third round on a night when Yule

GEORGE RECALLS

Foreman Takes A Trip Down Memory Lane

During the course of his interview with THE RING's Jack Welsh, George Foreman reminisced about some of the most memorable moments of his early career.

Mexico City, Mexico, 1968: Foreman wins the Olympic heavyweight championship with a second-round knockout over Iones Chepulis of the USSR.

"When I won the gold medal, I wanted everybody to know I was from the United States of America. So when we took our customary bows to the judges, I waved a small American flag I had in my robe. That's when I wound up on the front pages of newspapers all over the country. It's something I'll never forget, standing on the platform. They put the gold medal around your neck, they give you the Olympic wreath, and you're listening to the national anthem. There's nothing in sports to beat it. That moment from the Olympics can never be repeated."

Foreman takes the heavyweight title from Frazier in Jamaica

Kingston, Jamaica, January 23, 1973: Foreman kayos Joe Frazier in the second round to win the heavyweight championship of the world.

"I thought, *Well, sure ... maybe Joe Frazier will have an accident on his motorcycle.* I kept hoping something would happen. Coming up to the fight, I was scared. I didn't know what to do because I had seen Frazier fight Jerry Quarry. I remember thinking this guy's so tough, if you hit him, he likes it. I remember how he threw that famous left hook. It went *swooooooosssh,* sounding like a bullet passing my head. That's when I started thinking what I had to do. I didn't want to get hit by that left hook, so I knocked him out."

Ali stuns Foreman in the "Rumble In The Jungle"

Kinshasa, Zaire, October 30, 1974: Muhammad Ali kayos Foreman in the famous "Rumble In The Jungle" to regain the heavyweight title.

"Something happened in that fight because I couldn't believe anybody could beat me. I gave it all I had against Ali and got knocked out. I lost the heavyweight championship of the world, and it devastated my life. I kept telling myself something was wrong when I got home. I said I had to prove myself, and that's when I decided to fight five different guys in one day [April 26, 1975] in Toronto. I whipped 'em all because they got tired of whipping on me."

"We are not giving George Foreman any credibility at the moment," said Bill Cayton, Tyson's co-manager at the time. Arum, on the other hand, felt Foreman had his charisma to offer, plus the fact that he still had big-time power in both fists.

shoppers should have been thinking of different bells.

Arum also reported the fight drew a 4.6 rating on the Nielsen chart, where 2.0 is considered strong on cable-TV.

Arum, who is agreeable to detente with arch rival Don King if it secures Foreman a shot at Tyson, sounded like a promoter with his first major fight as he continued lauding George's regeneration as a fistfighter.

"The public is keenly interested in the new Foreman. Now he exudes charisma. When George was champion, he was overshadowed by Ali whenever he wasn't fighting. Lots of fighters were overshadowed by Ali. Now Foreman comes across as witty, a gentle man with a pleasing personality. George talks very well; he's a natural, and the key plus is there is still dynamite in either fist."

Whether or not the dynamite Arum speaks of is still powerful enough to take Foreman to a title shot remains a remote possibility at best. But what if the unlikely happens? What if one night Tyson and Foreman share the same ring with the combined alphabet titles on the line?

"Mike Tyson is a fine fighter," said Foreman. "He has the heavyweight championship, and I would like the opportunity to get into the ring with him. I feel I can beat Tyson. You have to admit that Tyson's mean. But if I get a chance to fight him, I'd make him run as soon as the bell rung. I'd have him going from side to side. You'll see another Sugar Ray Leonard out there—and it will be Tyson. I wouldn't give him any bad angles. I'd make him run, literally, on his bicycle."

Even if Foreman never gets that far, at least he doesn't have to worry about taking out the garbage anymore. ■

THE RING, May 1988

The Cover: George Foreman kept piling up victories against nobodies, and despite the level of opposition, "Big George" was garnering plenty of attention, as evidenced by this cover story. Foreman eyed a shot at Mike Tyson in the future, and some actually gave the ex-champ a shot at winning.

Cry For Argentina: Argentina enjoyed a rich tradition in boxing, featuring such world champions as Carlos Monzon *(pictured)*. But the country's boxing heritage took two major hits in late-1987, when Juan Domingo Roldan was knocked out by Thomas Hearns in four rounds, and Argentina's famed Luna Park Gym was closed.

Cream Puffs: As fighters like Michael Nunn *(pictured)* gained prominence, writer Joseph D'O'Brian feared a dangerous trend coming on. The future IBF middleweight champ could outpoint anyone, but lacked the knockout power to finish off an opponent. Fighters like Nunn, D'O'Brian predicted, were regrettably the future of boxing.

Show Stoppers: In its first two years, Showtime became a big player in TV boxing, surpassing such network stalwarts as NBC, ABC, and CBS. What made Showtime's start so successful was the quality of matches it televised, like Steve Cruz' upset of WBA featherweight champ Barry McGuigan.

Fighter Of The Month: Unified heavyweight champ Mike Tyson crushed former champ Larry Holmes in four rounds, setting up a possible showdown with Michael Spinks. "Iron Mike" was at the height of his popularity then, drawing 16 million viewers to HBO despite the sense that the fight would be a wipeout.

COME OUT WRITING

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

CAMACHO'S CON JOB

Solid professional Jesse James Leija garnered far more respect in his July 7 fight with Hector Camacho Jr. than Camacho Jr. gained, despite Camacho initially being announced as the winner. I submit that he quit in that bout due to being truly tested by the veteran Leija, and the cut was just a convenient excuse. One should note that Leija fought on despite a similar cut. Such a bout will do nothing to dispel perceptions that the younger Camacho is overly protected. Leija, by contrast, deserves every honor and credit for his superb performance. Jesse James brings class, quality, and style to the Sweet Science. We are still cheering for you, Jesse.

JOE HAMMELL
Waynesboro, PA

I just got done watching the "Baloney From Coney." Maybe if Larry Hazzard Jr. took the Nathan's hot dog out of his face long enough to actually watch the Camacho-Leija fight, he would have never have scored it 49-46. Jesse got screwed. "Not So Macho" quit, plain and simple.

JOE RALPH
Boston, MA

[Editor's note: Hazzard Jr. actually scored the fight 48-47 Camacho. His score was mistakenly announced as 49-46 initially. And he wasn't eating a hot dog.]

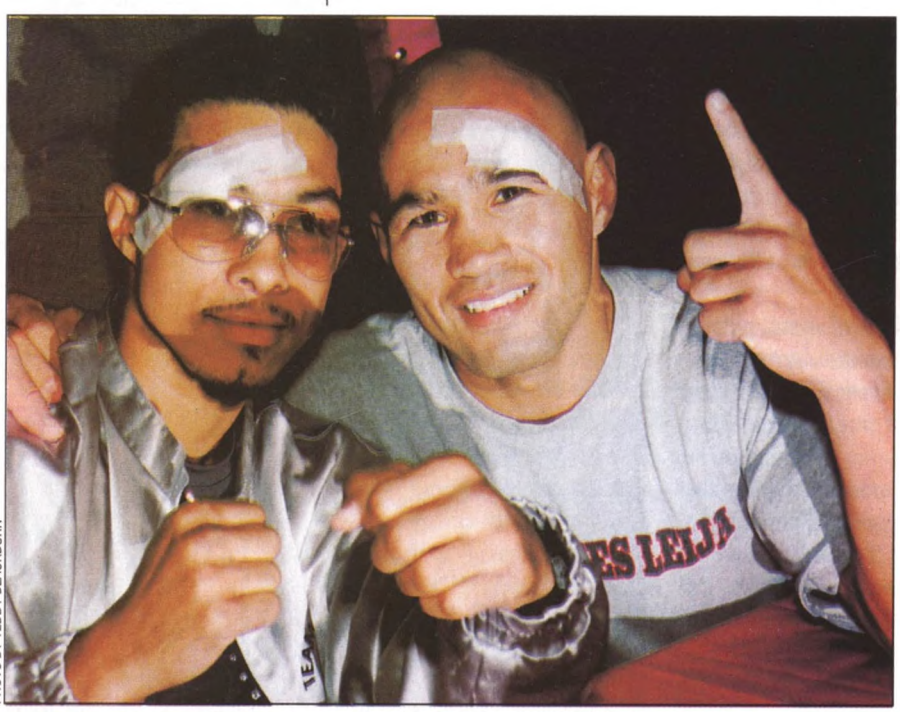


PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

Hector Camacho Jr. and Jesse James Leija pose at the press conference after their controversial bout at Coney Island. Many viewers of the fight, including readers Joe Hammell and Joe Ralph, felt Leija had a reason to smile, since he was the rightful winner.

MIDDLEWEIGHT MOSLEY?

I liked your section "The 20 Greatest Lightweights Of All-Time" in the September 2001 issue, and I agreed with most of your selections. I have just a quick comment about Shane Mosley. He didn't stay at lightweight long enough to get a unification bout with Steve Johnston, because Mosley had to almost kill himself to make the 135-pound limit. In his last fight as a lightweight, he weighed 151 by the time the fight started. Even welterweight is a struggle for him. Mosley should be a middleweight.

SETH DEMING
Santa Monica, CA

NO ROSES FOR ROSARIO

Reading Jeff Ryan's column in the August 2001 issue on why Edwin Rosario should be in the Hall of Fame, I couldn't help but think that this was a

clear case of mistaking a good puncher for a great fighter.

Why Rosario? I know he won four titles in two weight classes, but against soft opposition, at least by Hall of Fame standards. Hell, even Vinny Paz won two world titles, and he is nowhere near Hall of Fame material, right?

Let's not forget, the only time Rosario ever faced a great fighter, he got butchered by Julio Cesar Chavez. And remember that Jose Luis Ramirez and Juan Nazario both whacked him out—during his prime years, no less! Yes, Rosario did have talent, he just didn't take it to another level. Remember what old-timers say about great fighters: That they have something that is somewhat hard to describe, yet you know it when you see it. Something that goes beyond talent. Rosario didn't have it.

In a way, I'd rather see a guy like Jose Luis Ramirez in the Hall of Fame. He wasn't as talented a fighter as Rosario, but he made up for his shortcomings with durability and heart, the traits I cherish in a boxer. And he kayoed Rosario in the rematch, after getting shafted the first time they met.

Sure, Rosario had his share of brilliant moments, but he was no great fighter!

PHILIPP KRUCK
Marl, Germany

LIKES LANCE A LOT

I'd like to compliment you on your article about Lance Whitaker ("Lance Whitaker Is A Legitimate Threat," August 2001). It seems as if boxing has quite a collection of good guys going right now, guys like Whitaker, Kirk Johnson, Chris Byrd, Marco Antonio Barrera, and all of the guys on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*. Whitaker is a young heavyweight who will probably get a title shot sometime in the future. Keep up the good work, Lance.

RICK POMMELLS
Edmonton, Alberta

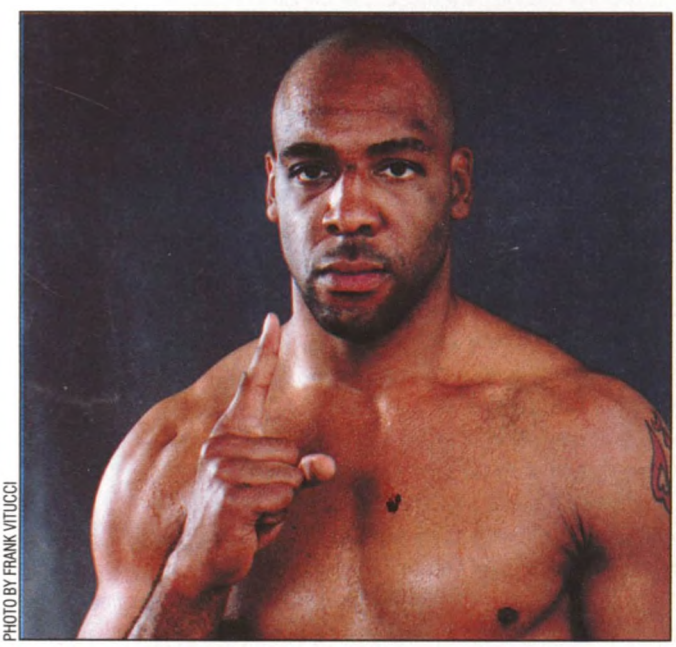


PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Hard-hitting nice guy Lance Whitaker is making headway in the heavyweight division. Whitaker's emergence is one of the good things about boxing, writes reader Rick Pommells.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Blame Oscar De La Hoya for the lackluster fight against Felix Trinidad, not "Tito," insists reader Daisy Rivera. If "The Golden Boy" had not run from Trinidad, Rivera writes, it would have been a much different outcome, and Trinidad would be recognized as the pound-for-pound champ.

DOWNING DE LA HOYA

I just need to say this before I burst. References are still being made to Shane Mosley being better than Felix Trinidad pound-for-pound because he beat Oscar De La Hoya more convincingly. I'm not going to use Trinidad making weight as an excuse, but the obvious truth is that Oscar is the one who chose not to fight "Tito" the way he fought Mosley. Mosley is getting all of the credit because Oscar chose to fight him aggressively, and therefore, gave him the opportunity to show his stuff.

I am also a Mosley fan, but I honestly believe that had Oscar fought Trinidad the same attacking way he fought Mosley, Oscar would have been knocked down or knocked out. He may have even knocked down Trinidad, as others have, but he wouldn't have beaten him. Trinidad is faulted for a boring fight, when in fact Oscar is the one who chose not to make it the Hearns-Hagler fight we all wanted to see.

DAISY RIVERA
Bronx, NY

In an era where a champion is often the third or fourth best fighter in his division, due to the different alphabet organizations handing out belts, should anyone be calling Oscar De La Hoya a six-time world champion?

At junior lightweight, Oscar ducked Azumah Nelson and Gabriel Ruelas, while winning the dubious WBO title from Jimmi Bredahl. At junior welter, Oscar ducked Frankie Randall, who was clearly the best junior welter in the world at that time, and instead fought the aged Julio Cesar Chavez. At welterweight, Oscar enjoyed highly controversial victories over Pernell "Sweet Pea" Whitaker and Ike Quartey. Knowledgeable fans were wondering if "The Golden Boy" was even the fourth-best welterweight.

Great fighters like Evander Holyfield, Roy Jones, and Felix Trinidad have beaten the best champions. Oscar has never beaten the top fighters in any division, he's never unified any titles, nor has he ever avenged any of his losses.

JOHN HOLT
Philadelphia, PA ■

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

JUDAH-TSZYU: THE UNIFICATION FIGHT THAT WON'T KOSTYA

Judah-Tszyu: "The payoff" for Showtime and for fans

Two of the boxing fan's most bitter enemies are split titles and pay-per-view prices. The former make the sport a cluttered mess, and the latter either take a toll on your wallet or force you to miss fights you're dying to see.

That's why the **Kostya Tszyu-Zab Judah** fight on November 3 is one of the boxing fan's best friends. First off, Tszyu and Judah are unifying all three major titles at 140 pounds, so when it's over, there will only be one guy to call "champ." And secondly, though it's a matchup far more attractive than many that are shown on pay-per-view, Tszyu-Judah will air on Showtime, meaning you won't have to skimp on the kids' Christmas gifts in order to afford the fight.

"As great a fight as it is," said *Showtime Championship Boxing* Executive Producer **Jay Larkin**, "neither fighter has crossed over enough yet to assure significant pay-per-view buys. After this fight, I anticipate that the winner will then be on a pay-per-view plane. But both guys have been showcased on Showtime a lot, and we wanted the unification bout to be on Showtime."

Judah, the IBF champion, and Tszyu, the WBC and WBA titleholder, were expected to meet in June, but Tszyu chose to make his WBC mandatory defense first. That was nearly a disastrous call, as the heavy-handed Russian struggled mightily before decisioning tough **Oktay Urkal** on June 23 to clear the way for one of the most anticipated fights in boxing.

"That was scary," said Larkin. "We knew Urkal was for real, and I'm just glad Kostya won. There are so many elements working against big unification fights coming together, and more often than not, long-term strategies to produce those fights get derailed. This is the exception. This is the payoff for a lot of planning, a lot of negotiating, and a lot of patience."

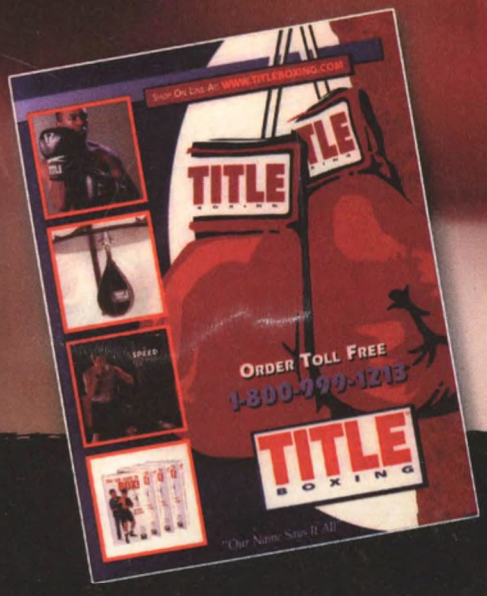
The fight will be the opening event at the new 10,000-seat arena at the Mohegan Sun Casino in Uncasville, Connecticut.

LISTEN UP

The undercard for the October 6 **Floyd Mayweather-Jesus Chavez** pay-per-view from the Paris Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas looks promising. WBC lightweight champ **Jose Luis Castillo** will defend against credible **Carlos Gerena** (the only man to post a professional win over Chavez), and top-notch prospect **Julio Diaz** will take on former champion **Cesar Bazan**. Give credit to promoter Top Rank for planning ahead, as both Mayweather and Diaz are being considered to challenge for Castillo's title next ... "The Thing In Beijing," as someone dubbed the **John Ruiz-Evander Holyfield** rubber match, has been rescheduled for October 20. The pay-per-view undercard remains the same, with one intriguing fight (**Rosendo Alvarez** vs. **Pichit C. Siriwat**) and two snoozers (**Henry Akinwande** vs. **Nate Jones** and **David Izon** vs. **Tommy Martin**) ... It appears that former featherweight champion **Naseem Hamed** will make his return to the ring on November 24 in England. Mediocre Spaniard **Manuel Calvo** is the probable opponent ... In other featherweight news, **Guty Espadas'** unexpected defeat to **William Abelyan** in August has shelved plans for a December pay-per-view featuring Espadas vs. **Erik Morales**, and **Marco Antonio Barrera** in a separate bout. Instead, Barrera-Morales II will probably go ahead in early-2002 without the buildup of a shared card ... In still more featherweight news, **Frankie Toledo** will make his first defense of the IBF title on November 9, against mandatory challenger **Manuel Medina**. Medina, a three-time former featherweight champ, decisioned Toledo in a 10-rounder in May '00 ... The **Joel Casamayor-Acelino Freitas** junior lightweight showdown is back on, but first the two undefeated fighters will share a Showtime card on September 29. It will actually be a tripleheader, with IBF 130-pound titlist **Steve Forbes** fighting a rematch with **John Brown** in the opener. ■

Toledo: Looking to avenge loss to Medina

NO HEADACHES.
NO HASSLES.



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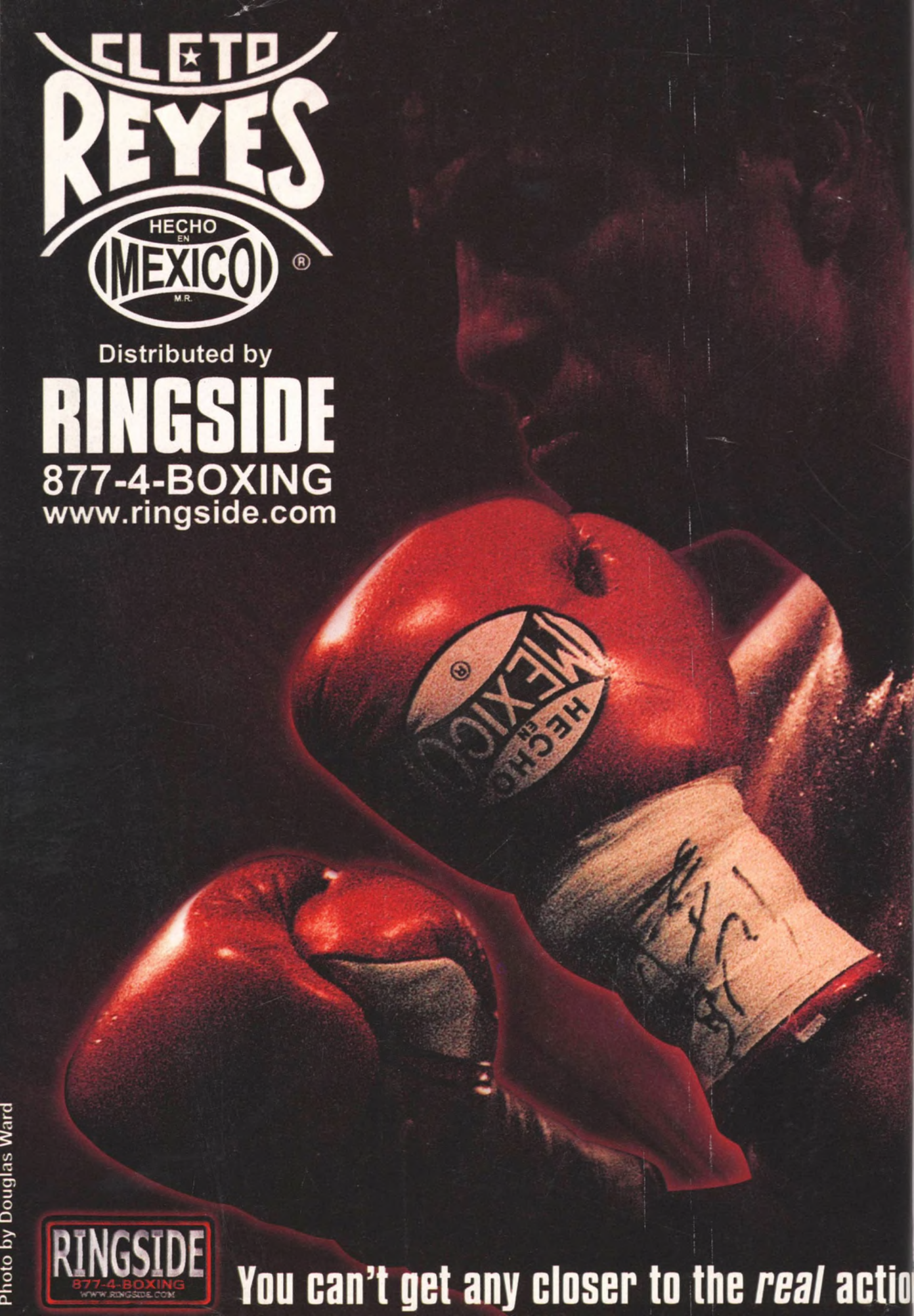
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